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(Hansard)**

**Thursday 25 April 2013**

**Jeudi 25 avril 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 25 avril 2013

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR  
LES ALIMENTS LOCAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 23, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 /  
Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur les aliments locaux.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's always an honour and a privilege to rise in this House and to rise on behalf of the phenomenal people of Parkdale–High Park, where we have done much to encourage the eating and the production of local food.

I want to send a shout-out right off the top to West End Food Co-op. It started with a few groups—a few very, very persuasive and committed volunteers—and has now grown into a farmers' market every week and its own store that operates week-long in Parkdale–High Park and that does phenomenal work. But, Mr. Speaker, we're here to speak about a bill, and the bill, unfortunately, doesn't help them.

Just so people at home who haven't read the bill know, all the bill really does is set aside a week called Local Food Week. Quite frankly this bill, so badly and ill-prepared, falls on the same week as Agriculture Week. So the agriculture minister, aka the Premier, who introduced this bill, I'm sure wanting to open up some rapport with farmers, in fact did just the opposite and bit the hand that she wanted to shake by introducing this in the first place.

Then again, local food—even the words—really is more a downtown Toronto issue than it is a rural issue. Most farmers don't have a problem eating local food. This is a bill aimed at the chattering classes in downtown Toronto. Let me tell you that those folk in downtown Toronto who care about local food have done way more than this bill does. They've actually worked hard to start co-ops. My own father was one of the founding members of Karma Co-op, one of the first co-ops ever for local food in Toronto. That started in the 1970s. So from the

1970s on, Torontonians have been active around the local food movement. Only now, in 2013, does the government pick up the term and introduce a bill that really just declares a week called Local Food Week.

This is absolutely the *modus operandi*—has been for 10 years—of the Liberal government: to follow rather than initiate, to come in after the fact rather than lead. They've done this on every file imaginable: introduce a bill that's more spin than substance. I'm thinking here of the poverty bill, 25-in-5. This is a government that's actually on track to increase poverty over their 10-year span by 25% rather than decrease it, but yet, there's the bill. In that case, the bill was two pages long and simply said, "We're committed to decreasing poverty by 25% in five years." Absolutely no way of doing that, no means to do it and no purpose behind it or will to do it; just a bill.

Here we have a bill, the Local Food Act—no procurement policies involved in the bill, no call on even the government and government ministries to actually buy local food, nothing practical, Mr. Speaker, nothing of real substance in this bill, just a week. Just a week declared for local food. In fact we're sitting in a place, Mr. Speaker, where if you got your coffee from the cafeteria this morning you were drinking Seattle's Best. Only in the province of Ontario, in the government of Ontario, would a government have the gumption to bring forward a local food bill while drinking Seattle's Best coffee in their own cafeteria. Even the words alone—I mean, surely, surely we can do better than that. But yet this bill does not.

Other instances of this government doing exactly the same thing: My colleague here was part of an all-party committee on mental health and addictions; 23 recommendations, of which three have been implemented. Twenty simply go by the wayside. The social assistance review: again, a review that cost a lot of money to taxpayers, just like the mental health committee cost a lot of money to taxpayers. What came out of all this? Virtually nothing.

This government not only brings in bills with words only and no substance but actually studies issues rather than acting on them, and we see this over and over again. We're seeing this with the great scandals this government has brought forward: Ornge, eHealth, the gas plant problems—all of these studied by committees, and at the end, the committees will make recommendations. Mr. Speaker, do we really have any confidence that this government will act on any of those recommendations? I think it's safe to say: absolutely none—absolutely none.

So here's the latest, the latest spin, the latest public relations announcement passing itself off as a legislative action—a bill—when really it's just a public relations an-

nouncement destined for those folk in downtown Toronto who want to hear the words “local food.” Well, you heard it. You got it. Downtown Toronto, you’ve heard: Kathleen Wynne has said local food is important. Meanwhile, the reality in the field is this: About 80% of the fresh fruits and vegetables we eat in this province come from somewhere else. That’s the actual reality on the ground. The average carrot travels over 3,000 kilometres to get to our markets, even though we could grow all the produce and we could, you know, eat here.

But there’s nothing in the bill to change that whatsoever. Not one iota, not one word in the bill actually addresses the problem of procuring local food, eating it or getting it into our markets. It’s just a week. I was laughing with one of my colleagues that maybe instead of named weeks and named days, this government could actually ask us to wear hats with words on them like “local food” one week and something else the next; maybe “mental health.” It would do about as much good. It would be cuter—at least we’d get a good laugh if we all wore a hat saying “local food”—than if this government brought forward a bill.

But this is no laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. This is real. You know, we are living on a planet whose days are numbered unless we act. We’re living with an agricultural community whose days are numbered if we don’t act to help them. And yet we get local food, the week; not local food action, not local food procurement policy, not local food regulation. No, we get local food, the week. Well, maybe local food, the hat, might be cuter; that’s all I’m saying.

And the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that this is 10 years of this, 10 long years of bills just like this in every file you can imagine, whether it’s mental health, poverty, food. Name it, and this government has brought forward a bill naming a week when they should have acted, naming a day when they should have done something.

I think Ontarians are beginning to wake up. I know in my riding, all the folk who actually do something around local food, like the West End Food Co-op, which has done so much in our own area, all the local farmers’ markets that happen, all the local community gardens that happen in my riding—all of them did it without the help of this government; no help from this government whatsoever in all of that. When I told all these folk about the Local Food Act and what it actually implied, that there’s going to be a week named Local Food Week, none of them were impressed. None of them saw this as a step forward. None of them were fooled.

None of them thought that just because “local food,” the words, come out of the Premier’s mouth, anything much is going to change to help them in their endeavours or in their lives. Not our local food producers, who just lost their Agriculture Week, which spoke far more to their concerns—they weren’t impressed—and not those who sit on the West End Food Co-op, some of whom were invited to a movie yesterday that none of the rest of us, by the way, got to see on local food. None of them were impressed by what this government’s doing. They

see it for what it is: spin, pure and utter spin, a public relations announcement instead of real government policy that would actually change the lives of the people that it impacts. And so it goes.

**0910**

This, again, from a government that’s supposed to be different—it’s supposed to be different. We weren’t supposed to get the same old same old that we got under the last Premier, Dalton McGuinty. We’re supposed to get something new. But really, what have we seen? We’ve seen the same old bills that were lost during prorogation come forward, and this new bill—yet again, the same kind of bill we’ve seen for 10 years, a bill that says something and does absolutely nothing.

What could they do? I’ve got one minute left to say. Well, we in the New Democratic Party have long since said, “Let’s look at our procurement policies as a government, as ministries.” We spend millions of dollars every year on food. Why don’t we make a procurement policy that requires that we spend at least 25% of that on locally grown food? But that would actually be something; that would actually do something. Instead, they want to name a week.

Again, speaking as a downtown Torontonian, we’re not fooled. I can tell you, the agricultural corridor is not fooled. In fact, they’re upset. They lost their Agriculture Week that this bill runs roughshod over just because whoever designed it didn’t check the calendar correctly. Actually, it helps absolutely no one.

Again, a shout-out to those in the field who are actually doing something: West End Food Co-op, Masaryk-Cowan HOPE Garden and all the others who actually do something, unlike this Liberal government. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I’d like to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her comments, but, yet again, I didn’t see anything positive really coming out of there. I was at—

**Interjection:** It’s unfortunate.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It’s unfortunate, yes. I was at Sustain Ontario, the reception here yesterday, and I can tell you there was a lot of enthusiasm in that room—the people who were here supporting Foodland Ontario, supporting this government’s support of Foodland Ontario over the last nine years.

I want to comment on Agriculture Week versus Local Food Week. What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, with regard to that is, we attempted to put that week at a time when we thought, and think, that it would be complementary to Agriculture Week. The opposition, obviously, thinks differently.

I want to talk about the comment that she raises with regard to 80% of fruits and vegetables coming from somewhere else. I’ve spoken to retailers. I was at the Foodland Ontario Retailer Awards a couple of weeks back, and I can tell you what they’re telling me is that they need to make sure that they have enough product on

the shelves at all times. Consumer demand is paramount for profits for retail, such as Sobeys and Metro. I think it's no secret that I was fortunate enough to be a part of those retailer awards. I'm in the flyer presenting and congratulating those who do so well at showcasing local foods in those larger chains.

They're telling me that there is volatility in Ontario when it comes to ensuring that there's an adequate supply. Last year, for example, we experienced an early spring. Buds in the fruit trees came out and crops were damaged. So how are we supposed to ever legislate targets, which the opposition and the third party are suggesting? It's just not possible here in Ontario.

I have quite a bit more I'd like to say in congratulating the good work that people do in local food, and I guess I'll have to wait.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Our member for Parkdale–High Park gave us a kind of morning wake-up call from the urban perspective. I used to have a rooster like that, but it would crow about three hours earlier to get us going. I hated that rooster—but I don't hate Cheri. You crow at 9:15; that's more reasonable.

The member opposite indicated that there was not much positive in the presentation, and I agree with both parties: There isn't much positive to say about this legislation. There are shortcomings—a lot that is not said. Sure, we're talking about declaring yet another week, a Local Food Week. That has been done. That was done—I think it was 1998. Bert Johnson, an MPP in this House for a number of years, brought in Agriculture Week. As I recall, I attended the launch down at Toronto city hall.

The member for Parkdale–High Park mentioned somewhat facetiously, “Well, there will probably be another hat, a local food hat or a Local Food Week hat.” I've probably got a hat that says that; I think I've got about 150 tractor hats, in just about every vehicle that I own and every building that I own. Sometimes those slogans work. I'm sure the members opposite will probably show up at the plowing match with their red rubber boots and their Local Food Week hats. That's one prediction that I will make, so we'll stay tuned for that one.

Sometimes the slogans work. I think of the power behind that expression “farmers feed cities,” which again, is something the member from Parkdale–High Park is fully aware of.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'm pleased to join the debate this morning on the Local Food Act and to comment on remarks made by the member from Parkdale–High Park. I agree with her in so many ways that this is just the tip of the iceberg. This is symbolic and little else. The symbolism is really important if we could put some substance behind it.

I brought a friend of mine into the Legislature earlier this week who has been an advocate for sustainable food for years. She spent a decade of her life working on these

issues. She was very interested—she had never been in this building—and she sat in the gallery and listened to debate. She said, “What are people talking about? They are just listing food items. They are just listing the names of markets and gardens. Where's the substance of this bill?” She thought she was missing something. I had the misfortune to say, “No, this is just the quality of debate in this House at this moment.”

There is so much that can be done that should be done to support agriculture in Ontario, to support more sustainable forms of agriculture. There are actual policy initiatives that could be done. If you look to Quebec, Quebec is supporting young farmers. People are coming out of school—because the older generation is packing up and the younger generation don't know if they can farm—and Quebec is supporting farmers there. We're not doing that, and there's nothing in this bill to suggest that.

Folks like Sustain Ontario have talked about the need for actual education around food. They've made those suggestions. They were here yesterday. There's nothing in this act that's actually going to talk about how to do that in our schools. I read something this morning about farmers saying, “We should have home economics in our schools.” That's not here, Speaker.

There is so much more that needs to be done. As a Toronto member, I've had the opportunity to travel a little bit in my time here and to go to northern Ontario, where people don't have access to affordable food. Why don't we have in this bill something that will support northern communities and northern aboriginal communities that are struggling with the health impacts of not having that access? I wish we could elevate the debate here and put some real substance in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise to speak about Bill 36. I do recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park and her comments. The bill is not just about the city of Toronto. As a member from the city of Toronto, I don't believe this bill is about just the city of Toronto.

It is clearly laid out, Mr. Speaker—the three purposes of the bill. So I'm going to remind the member opposite. It says clearly here that the purposes of this act are to:

“1. To foster successful and resilient local food economies and systems throughout Ontario.

“2. To increase awareness of local food in Ontario, including the diversity of local food.

“3. To encourage the development of new markets for local food.”

Mr. Speaker, when we have international guests visiting Ontario, they consistently say how proud they are, how safe our food is and what good quality our food is.

I know this is the right thing to do. There's no question we need to raise the level of conversation, because we know the agriculture-food industry is one of the largest in this province, and each one of us in this House is very proud of this sector.

**0920**

More importantly, I remember yesterday morning attending the breakfast with OFA members. They have

told us, “Please, when you bring this bill through, put in some more substance about the whole issue of food literacy,” which we can all do. As someone formerly from the Toronto District School Board, I already connected with them. So at the end of the day, there are things already being done about food literacy. The new term is not “home economics”; that’s not sexy enough for young people to do. They like the fact that the technology piece and the food-cooking shows and food networks are bringing young people and encouraging food strategies, but also affordability and sustainability. This is the right thing to do: to champion this very successful sector.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Parkdale–High Park, you have two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thanks to everyone who weighed in on this debate. The member from Scarborough–Agin-court talked about how people love our food when they come to Ontario. Too bad 80% of it doesn’t come from here, our fruits and vegetables. That’s my point, Mr. Speaker. The point is that this bill does nothing to change the reality of food and local food in Ontario whatsoever. That’s the point. Still, 80% of it is imported fruits and vegetables—fruits and vegetables that could be grown here, that could be marketed here. Still, the average carrot travels almost 4,000 kilometres to get to our market here. Still, this bill changes nothing. It changes nothing about what we eat even in this Legislature. It changes nothing about what governments buy or ministries buy. No wonder those who are involved in agriculture said, “Put some meat on the bones of this bill,” because this bill is all bone, no meat. All it says is, “We encourage people to eat local food. Let’s have a local food week.”

We’re going to use hours and hours of our time in this Legislature debating this bill—and yes, she’s right: When it gets to committee, will we try to add something to it? Absolutely. But come on. It is the government’s job to actually bring in legislation that changes people’s lives and helps folk. This doesn’t change anybody’s life and it doesn’t help anybody. Now they’re relying on the opposition to make this bill into a bill, and not just a public relations statement. That’s not governing. That’s not leading. What is that? That is simply pandering.

The reason I raised downtown Toronto is because that’s where local food has the greatest meaning. As I said, farmers already eat locally. It’s about getting that local food to market, to these great capital centres of ours, including downtown Toronto.

So again, will we put meat on the bones of the bill? We’ll try. That’s all I can say about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** For the sake of the 13.4 million people who call Ontario home and want to buy fresh Ontario local food for their families and businesses, and for sake of the 164,000 people whose jobs are generated by the Ontario farming sector, I’d hoped, and I think many of my PC colleagues and other colleagues in the

House had hoped, that we would be proven wrong when we said that Premier Wynne could not take on both the job of Premier and the job of agriculture—and food, let’s not forget that part; it’s critically important. Unfortunately, this window-dressing bill—and this is another one; we see examples of these window-dressing bills all the time—has proven both me and the rest of my PC caucus right.

During her leadership run, the Premier promised a strengthened Local Food Act. I know many in the food and agriculture industry were excited for this new act. Many in the industry and many in our caucus put forward concrete proposals for the act that would have strengthened our food system, increased access to local food and helped our agriculture sector, which continually struggles a little bit more every year.

In fact, I think most people in Ontario were happy to hear of a bill to support Ontario food. Obviously, promoting local food is a concept that I think everybody can get behind. As a father of two young children, I feel better feeding my kids food that I know has come from local Ontario farms. In fact, one of my daughter’s best friends has a farm that’s been given awards by the Premier: Nicholyn Farms. I make a point of going to Nicholyn Farms, to the little market that they have there for local food in Ontario. By “local” we mean 60 kilometres around the area, and that’s all the beef and vegetables—you name it; they have it there, and it’s the highest-quality food you could probably buy anywhere. A little more expensive, but it’s better quality and you’re supporting local food. That’s supporting local food.

People like that. People like to buy local, they really do, if they’re given the chance and the opportunity. A good example is the Foodland Ontario symbol, a part of a government program established by our party in 1997, and it’s recognized by over 94% of grocery shoppers.

This bill does a lot less than what stakeholders need and want. It actually does very little of what it says it’ll do, that being promoting local food. I know, the rest of the PC caucus knows and stakeholders also know that to support local food, we need to support Ontario farmers. So it’s disappointing when Premier Wynne opted not to take the time to really listen to farmers and other stakeholders, as a Minister of Agriculture and Food should, and put forward a bill that actually addresses their concerns such as too much red tape, increasing energy costs and a horse racing industry that’s on the ropes.

Instead she chose to put forward a bill that amounts to not much more than good intentions, and I’ll give it that. This bill may be a good starting point. It aims to bring more to local food and encourages public sector institutions to buy local, and allows the Minister of Agriculture and Food to set goals or targets in respect to local food, even though there is no mention of what these goals and targets should be or aim at. We all know that if you want to have goals and targets, you’d better have them in mind. You’d better do better than just talking about them; you’d better actually have them so you can achieve them.

Furthermore, even though the bill states that the minister could consult with stakeholder organizations before

setting these goals and targets, whatever they may be, we worry that the minister, with so little experience in this industry, gets the final say in what these targets are and that the bill does not even define who the relevant organizations would be.

The bill also provides that the minister may direct a public sector organization to provide information regarding local food targets and steps that have been taken to achieve that goal. But, Speaker, the bill does little else. There is too much at stake in Ontario's agri-food industry for a Local Food Act that does almost nothing substantial to promote local food and to help the farmers who actually provide local food.

What's at stake? Promoting local food in Ontario should be taken more seriously by the Liberal government. This unsubstantial bill demonstrates that the Liberal government either doesn't really know or doesn't really realize the importance of the agriculture and food industry to the social and economic well-being of all of Ontario. This is further evidenced by the political campaign move by the Premier, who can't even get the title of the portfolio down properly.

Here are some of the facts about the industry which demonstrate why promoting local food is so important for Ontario: 25% of Canadian farms are actually located in Ontario; there are almost 52,000 farms and 75,000 farm operators in Ontario; and Ontario is renowned worldwide as a leader in safe, high-quality food and in agricultural innovations.

The potential to export and be self-sustaining. We have the potential to export and be self-sustaining, but Ontario imports exceed exports by about \$424 million. That makes no sense because we're the third-largest food producer in North America. Ontario's blessed with the majority—over 50%—of Canada's best agricultural land. Ontario raises the most chickens, has the most dairy cows in the country and is a major producer of corn, fruit, soybeans, nursery plants, flowers, vegetables, eggs, poultry, lamb, hogs, beef and dairy products. That's just about everything.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is the capital of beef.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is the capital of beef, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen sound says. There we go; there's some food promotion for you.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** There you go; there's local food promotion at its finest.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Even in Barrie we see examples of red tape. I want to give a little example of red tape in Barrie that just happened recently. We need to make it easier for businesses to promote local food, yet there's too much regulation leading to missed opportunities. There's actually a local hamburger restaurant in Alliston—some of us heard about this in the newspaper; it actually made the news. It's a town that neighbours Barrie, about a 25-minute drive from Barrie—whose owner knows the value of local Ontario food and is proud to use and advertise that it uses locally sourced products. It was

told to take down signs advertising this, because they were serving beer from a local brewery from Barrie. So in other words, they were told by this government, by this bureaucracy, that they couldn't advertise a beer made in Barrie as local. Yet it's only about 30 or 40 kilometres away. If that's not local, I don't know what is.

What is our definition of "local"? We sit in this House, representing all of Ontario. We should be sticking together and supporting each other, supporting our communities. To actually ask a restaurant to take down advertisements that they're serving local food when it's actually not local, it's 30 or 40 kilometres away, is splitting hairs, folks. We need to do what we can to support local food. That's not supporting local food.

**0930**

And it's not only that. If he doesn't take down the sign, he can be charged up to \$50,000. If you want to protect local food and you want to promote local food, let's start there: not punishing restaurants for advertising local food. It is counterintuitive; I just don't understand it. His other restaurant also sources food from communities in Ontario other than Alliston, and now he's worried that he has to stop promoting local foods.

I mean, let's start there. If you want to do a bill that actually makes sense and actually accomplishes what it says it's going to accomplish, why don't we start at the obvious spot and stop punishing local restaurants for advertising and selling local food? It makes sense, doesn't it? This one restaurateur wants to support local food, and he can't for fear of being charged a \$50,000 fine.

Let's pull our heads out of the sand here, folks. This is because of different definitions of "local food" federally and provincially. Provincially, local is all of Ontario; federally, it must be neighbouring municipalities. We need legislation tackling this, or more coordination between governments. That's your job, and you can't pass that on to another bureaucracy like you do with everything else, guys. It's nice that provincially we'll have an act to promote local food, if this passes, but what does that matter if businesses can't advertise Ontario food as local? It seems like bad oversight on behalf of the minister's office, and this is a huge loss of potential for local food here in Ontario.

We need to make it easier, not harder, for businesses to put Ontario food on the table and promote it in stores and restaurants. I know there's one restaurant in Barrie that just opened up called the Farmhouse, which is proudly serving nothing but local food, and if they are stymied from actually serving local food because the definition is that it's not in the city of Barrie, well, I'll tell you what: We don't have one farm in the city of Barrie. We have lots of them surrounding Barrie that feed us. If we can't promote that as being local, that's a crying shame.

Mr. Speaker, at most I can tell that this bill is a stepping stone. Again, I said I'll give it that: good intentions. But mostly it's just a missed opportunity. It has the potential, but there's still so much more to be done. In

our white paper, the PC Party has put forward concrete proposals to actually promote local food and agribusinesses, proposals that have taken into account the concerns and ideas of the people who understand the industry the best. It's unfortunate that the Minister of Agriculture and Food did not implement at least one of these real-world proposals into this bill. It's also unfortunate that the Premier, who's supposed to be representing Ontario farmers, has replaced Ontario Agriculture Week with Ontario Local Food Week, instead of keeping these two distinct, separate entities that properly mark their importance. Maybe it was just a careless oversight to complement a substance-lacking bill, but if oversights and pieces of unsubstantial legislation are indications of things to come from the Premier, as both the Minister of Agriculture and Food and as Premier, I think we have good reason to be more than a little concerned, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's an honour to be able to stand in the House on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane and make a few remarks on the remarks of the member from Barrie on the Local Food Act. I agreed with a lot of the points he brought up—not all of them, but a lot of them.

I think one of the biggest problems he brought up and that I'd like to expand on is that this bill says it would like to set goals and objectives, but it doesn't actually—there's no evidence of what these goals or objectives are going to be until three years after the passage of the bill. Quite frankly, is the legislation worth the paper it's written on, or should we expect to pass legislation that doesn't have goals and objectives as part of what you're striving for? This bill is very, very weak on that, and that's why those on this side of the House keep saying it's more promotional material—and it is. We're spending a lot of time talking about local food. I'm sure in the next campaign the government is going to spend a lot of time beating down the back roads talking about local food. But the problem is that the goals and objectives are somewhere way at the back. They don't even say what they are; they're going to talk about them.

I hear the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell: "We can't do this because it might harm trade agreements," even though there are countries to the south of us, the States, and in the European Union who do have goals and objectives, who operate under much stricter trade rules than we do. So, once again, that's a red herring, and that one really, for those of us on this side of the House, is a big problem.

If it's worth having a goal, it's worth setting out what the goals and objectives are, and it's definitely worth actually who you're going to consult with and at what time. Unless those things are in the amendments to this bill, it's going to be very hard to pass this one into law.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I was delighted that this bill was put forward for consideration by the House because I

think all of us in this Legislature recognize that the people of Ontario have an opportunity to have access to safe, fresh, tasty and healthy food, which is grown right here in our own province, in various parts of that province.

I don't think most people recognize the economic importance of agriculture as well. When we talk to people, particularly in the cities or in districts of the province, and you ask them what has the greatest impact economically, they'll mention various industries—often manufacturing—which are very important, but they will underestimate the impact economically that agriculture has in our province. It has a massive impact, but it's spread across the province. So that is why, in some cases, it's not recognized for its true importance.

It's important, as well, to preserve the land that we have there. There are many people who can't wait to pave every last square centimetre of the province, to develop everything that they see in sight. We have a limited amount of agricultural land available right across Canada—right across Canada—and we should be preserving that.

It's important, as well, to label things absolutely correctly and accurately so that people, when they're going to get local food, know that it's genuinely local food: Ontario-grown and Canadian-grown. I know there's a gentleman by the name of Doug Whitty. He and his wife and family operate a farm in the St. Catharines area where you can actually go to the roadside and make your purchases which you know are going to be local and you know are going to be of the highest quality.

I think it's important that we support the bill. It has a major impact for this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I do want to recognize and respect the member from Barrie—that he was quite passionate about it, in terms of the inability to classify local brewers as local food. I would tend to agree with him on that.

But I think the substance of the bill was summed up very well by the member from Timmins-Cochrane, where he said there's actually nothing in the bill—basically is what he said. I tend to agree with him. It's more to do about nothing in terms of, if you look at agriculture today and what they've done; it's quite tragic, really.

They said that the greenbelt was to protect agricultural land. What it's done is create more red tape. They want to build a farm implement building, for instance, to continue their business or change their business. The greenbelt legislation is very rigorous in terms of the prohibitions that it affects.

But I always like to think of local food by looking at my riding of Durham and not just to the damage that it's done to the quarter horse industry, which I talked to Dean Link and Bob Broadstock about this morning. They are two farm families where quarter horses are an important part of their business who are now being threatened out

of business and their agriculture. What they do is they use hay and oats and wheat and buy tractors and use veterinarians and keep rural Ontario alive and vibrant, and provide entertainment for the province of Ontario.

I also look at others in my riding, and I can't help but think of a couple of Deputy Ministers of Agriculture who live just up the road from where I do. I think of Knox farm. Ken Knox, great guy—his family is still continuing the farm traditions, and just up the road from where I live.

I have a couple of others: The Archibald family is very well respected in agriculture. Bruce Archibald, I think, is a deputy federally. The Archibald fruit wine orchard in my riding is a destination on farm tours as well as tourism in Ontario generally. So there's a lot to be proud of.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again, it's with pleasure that I rise to talk about the food act, because, essentially, as the Minister of the Environment indicated earlier, it's a good thing. It actually starts a discussion that we should have been having for a very, very long time.

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To the member from Barrie, I really appreciate hearing about what's going on in your area. It gives me a better appreciation of the farming community and the agricultural sector in your area. It's really nice to see that you're as passionate as I feel about what's going on in Algoma-Manitoulin. However, this bill essentially does not do anything for them other than identify a week. But it does start a discussion, and that's really important.

The member from Durham actually made a very interesting point. He was highlighting a point that my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane actually raised: that there's really nothing in this bill. We agree that there's nothing in this bill. It's something that really starts a discussion; we're hoping we're going to see something once it gets into committee. However, in the same sentence, he indicated that this adds red tape. If it adds red tape, then you're saying there's something in this bill. I would expect him to maybe change that in further comments that he's going to have because, really, there is nothing in this bill, so I can't see the red tape—unless you're cutting the cord in order to introduce this bill somewhere.

The concern I have, and my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane actually said it, is that it will be three years before we get goals and objectives that are going to come out of this. That's one of the points. A bigger concern I have is: Who is going to be providing those goals and objectives? Who's going to be questioned? How are they going to reach out to those communities? Because if you're reaching out to friends, how are you going to be challenged to really put meat into this bill? Where is it going to be coming from? I know in Algoma-Manitoulin we haven't been reached yet, so I'm looking forward to hearing these discussions for the farmers in the agricultural sector that I have in Algoma-Manitoulin.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Barrie, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I think the member from Algoma-Manitoulin had it right. The time for conversation is really over. We hear a lot from this other side about conversation and discussion. Although that's important, we've had 10 years to have discussion and conversation. Now is the time for action. We need to actually take action, do more than just put nice window dressing up for these bills. We need to actually get some action to get Ontario back on its feet and going again, and that starts in our agricultural industry in Ontario. That's where it all begins. That's where it all began in the history of Ontario. We need to do everything we can to make sure that this industry survives and thrives so the rest of us can survive and thrive.

I think my colleague from Oxford put it best when he said that while it's important to celebrate local food, the government seems to have forgotten where all that food comes from. We need to keep Local Food Week and Agriculture Week separate in order to fully recognize and celebrate the contributions of all our farmers.

Our caucus has listened to farmers and stakeholders and come up with bold, practical ideas to promote Ontario food through connecting Ontario farmers and food manufacturers and producers with Ontario businesses and addressing the concerns that farmers have on a daily basis. We realize the importance of this industry and see its potential, and we know that all of Ontario will benefit when we buy local food. It contributes to our economy. It's fresher, healthier food for our families. Food is produced to our standards; we know it's produced to our standards. We have more control over it. There are shorter distances to travel, making a smaller carbon footprint, and that's good for the environment. We know how important the environment is to you guys and how much attention you want to pay to that. Our children can understand where food comes from; it will increase food literacy. It will help combat child obesity.

All around, it's a good thing to promote local food. This bill doesn't do enough to do it, but it does start the conversation. That's probably the best thing it does.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this legislation. As an MPP for the rich rural riding of Haldimand-Norfolk, and with a bit of a background in agriculture, I would say that this legislation is a bit of a start. It could do a lot more to support farming and local food.

Now, when I describe my riding as rich, I'm referring to the diversity of farm commodities and natural resources down our way. I'm blessed to hail from an area that's known as Ontario's garden. It has always been known as Ontario's golden garden, one of the most—actually, it is Canada's most diverse agricultural area. We're about 100 miles from Toronto. Anybody here that's on a 100-mile diet: Keep that in mind.

We're more than willing to ship the food into the city. In fact, during the season, the trucks roll in at 2, 3, 4

o'clock in the morning to the Ontario Food Terminal. I commend our member from Oxford. We are going forward with a proposal for at least one other regional food terminal.

Down in Norfolk—and again, don't wait for us to truck it to Toronto; come on down. Why buy retail? Come on down at the wholesale level at farmers' markets. You can go right to the farm gate, the roadside stands, and we also had some excellent homegrown restaurants.

Why are we Canada's most diverse agricultural area? It's partly due to the soil types, our microclimate; we're down on Lake Erie; longer growing seasons. As well, we have that knowledge base going back many, many years: the mechanical skills, the business skills in agriculture. We know how to manage farm labour, for example.

We know how to manage sand in Norfolk and we know how to manage clay. My grandfather would always say, "Down our way," on the Barrett side, "our family is blessed with sandy Norfolk county farms but we're blessed with Haldimand clay." It can be a challenge to deal with that particular soil type. My mum's farm is on Norfolk sand. The family had been farming there since 1796. It's still in the family; it's now in the hands of my cousin. There's just one example of one family, on my mother's side, that has been farming for something like 217 years now. Our riding has been producing food for well over 200 years. It is part of our culture, and we know how to do it.

Our area is known for some extraordinary foods. Some products here I know very little about, actually. Edamame: Anybody here know what edamame is? Goji berries: health food. Horse radish—of course, you'll see Norfolk horse radish all over North America at the retail level. Lake Erie yellow perch; pickerel. Norfolk county alone is Ontario's leading grower of apples, asparagus and cabbage. We're also number one in growing cucumbers, green onions, shallots, peanuts and pumpkin. I have some pickled pumpkin in my refrigerator. Strawberries, of course, and sweet corn. Again, we cover the north-eastern United States with sweet corn. Sweet potatoes and zucchini: I used to grow zucchini. My grandmother and I would market zucchini through the local IGA.

Haldimand, of course, is famous for beef. Dairy: the famous Hewitt's Dairy bars. They've been in business for over 150 years now. Broilers. The flower trade; the greenhouse trade. I think of Rosa Flora. They're North America's largest producer of the gerbera daisy. Snyder's sweet corn is grown on Grand River silt.

Speaker, down in Haldimand-Norfolk, we can grow just about anything. The problem is selling it, and that's why I'm disappointed in this legislation. Some other commodities down our way: Belgian endive. Currants: My cousin grows currants. Maple syrup, and a new trade—the member from Oxford was down recently: We're developing a number of very successful wineries. Burning Kiln wine last year won the Legislative Assembly award for red wine.

I'll use another example down our way: VG Meats are the winners of Ontario Finest Meat Competition. VG is

an abattoir and a retail operation operated by the Van Groningen family, initially to sell beef raised on their farm. In fact, their herd of cattle shares the line fence with my farm. Every morning, I get to take a look at what I'm going to be eating a few months down the road. That's local, Speaker. They produce beef on a vegetable-based diet with no steroids. They have a retail operation down outside of Simcoe. They also have one up in Elfrida, a new retail operation up there. As part of their advertising, they say that if you were closer to the farm, as far as their product, you'd have to wear rubber boots.

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So every aspect of the meat, from farm to store, is locally controlled. They join a number of very successful families with abattoirs down our way: the Dekonings, the Miedemas. Townsend Butchers just put \$1.4 million into their facility. I mentioned the restaurants. I think of the church basements. The quality of the food that you can get in rural Ontario—it's something that we could do well to better export to cities like not only Toronto but Hamilton, London, Windsor.

There's good hunting and fishing down our way. I figure if you're going to catch it or shoot it, you should eat it. I mentioned earlier that I do have some squirrel in my freezer if anyone is interested. My mom has an excellent recipe; it's called Bridge Street stew. You can put in beef; you can put in squirrel. I see a big smile on the face of the member from Oshawa over there. Lots of squirrel outside this building, Jerry. I don't know—.22 or 20-gauge; what do you figure? One or the other. We could do some harvesting.

You know, with respect to our area, our involvement in growing food, there's a very interesting project with respect to, in part, promoting food but promoting health care food with our area health care facilities. It's called Norfolk County's Local Foods to Health Care Facilities initiative. These are the kinds of products that should be encouraged within all government entities, really. Again, we've got to ensure that everybody is eating the best they can locally, locally available to them, and make sure they know what to do with it as well.

Randy Pettapiece, my colleague here: In his riding in Stratford, they have a local community food centre that's teaching people how to grow food, harvest, cook and preserve local foods. It's called a community food centre. They describe it as a welcoming space where people come together to grow, to cook. It provides emergency access to high-quality food in a dignified setting and doesn't compromise people's self-worth. This is something I think we have to think about in any of our deliberations, with respect to social assistance in this province; so go beyond the traditional food bank or charitable giving approaches. Again, it benefits everyone and benefits local food.

I'm very disappointed that this legislation does not talk about agricultural education. I used to teach agriculture at the high school level. Once upon a time, our high schools taught kids how to cook, the home ec classes; now I understand there's a Cosmo program that

teaches young people how to apply makeup and things like that. That may well be important, I don't know, but I think we could be educating young people a bit more about farming and a bit more about food.

There's no question agriculture is a major driver in our economy. We know the comparisons with the auto industry, and I also suggest we think beyond food. Ginseng is a very important crop down our way—locally grown; probably the best you'll find anywhere in the world—and, of course, our area remains famous for locally grown tobacco.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm pleased to rise and contribute my comments to the Local Food Act that we're discussing today. You know, one of the things that we've talked about is how farmers help the economy. For every job in the agricultural sector, that supports four other additional jobs in our economy, so that's one really great reason to support local food.

Also, local food is fresher. When you purchase food that's grown here in Ontario or within your city or around the outskirts, you know it's going to have a different taste. It's going to taste crisper; it's going to be fresher.

The other reason is because it's good for the environment. If we're growing local food, it cuts down on pollution. So that's another reason we want to do that.

In London, there's a very interesting initiative being taken. It's a business called Eat Green Organics. What they do is they provide organic food weekly, and they deliver it to people's homes. People can order a box of food and mix up the variety, and they'll deliver it to you. It's grown locally, and then they're even going to take it to your home. So there's really no reason why you wouldn't want to support local food when they're going to bring it right to your door.

Another business that has been operating in London is called On The Move Organics. They do the same thing, but they also go a step further and try to help the environment. In that concept of how local food does help the environment, they'll deliver it on a bicycle if you're within 18 square kilometres of their delivery area. So that is an awesome initiative. You're growing locally, so you're helping the economy. You're also supporting your local businesses—so you're supporting your farmers; you're supporting your local businesses that are selling that—and you're also supporting the environment. I'm very proud of those two initiatives in London that help local food and our farmers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I'd like to thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for his comments. I can tell you that I'm not really that interested in eating squirrel, but if that tickles their fancy, that's completely fine.

I'd like to talk positively, Mr. Speaker, about some of the great things that are happening in my riding. We've heard a lot of negativity concerning the Local Food Act

which contradicts what the good people that are producing local food and marketing their local food are doing in many communities right across the province.

Particularly in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell we have something that's called the Foire Gourmande. Foire Gourmande is an initiative in Lefontaine, Ontario. It's where local exhibitors get together and exhibit the great foods that they make—not only foods but wines and beers. We partner up with the Quebec side as well: Montebello. From the Montebello marina to Lefontaine, there's a ferry that goes back and forth and brings residents of Quebec over into my riding. In return, the residents go over to see the good things that are happening in local food on the Quebec side.

It's a great event. I attended for the last year or two. We showcase Ontario wines like Domaine Perrault. We have Beau's Brewery there, and Cassel Brewery. These are part of the local food, where we support our local businesses. Bearbrook Farm is there; Fromagerie St-Albert—I know everybody here loves St-Albert cheese. Those are just to name a couple that are actually there.

We also have every fall, Mr. Speaker, the Vankleek Hill Festival of Flavours. There's a gentleman there, Phil Arber, who organizes this great event, right down the main street of Vankleek Hill. It's a wonderful event, and I'd encourage everybody to come to Glengarry–Prescott–Russell to enjoy great Ontario food.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak. I did have the opportunity in the past to speak on this legislation. I tried, as did the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, to bring forward some of the discussion as pertains to other than the standard food sources—when he spoke about the squirrel. It has been mentioned a couple of times now. It's kind of like something from Duck Dynasty, which is fine and is just normal course. I think the member tried to emphasize the fact that there are other opportunities out there anyway. I think it was pickled pumpkin, or pickled—

**Interjection:** Pickled pumpkin.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:**—pickled pumpkin that he had as well. These are the sorts of things that are going to set Ontario front and centre in a lot of other jurisdictions. I know, quite frankly, right now it's about time to start picking wild leeks. I'll be looking—as I have one son who's very active in picking that—for markets to put those up for sale, whether it's through the Mennonites up on Glenarm Road, or it could be Algoma Orchards, which has a tendency to retail some of those local products.

I think the emphasis by the member was to try and focus on the fact that there are other things that are out there. He mentioned the perch and other things that come from his community. It's great to hear. Those are the sorts of things that Ontario needs to be able to stand up and say, “We're proud that we have these opportunities to promote these different aspects.” He also mentioned maple syrup. In my debate in the past, I talked extensive-

ly about the maple syrup market. Now two thirds of all maple syrup consumed in Ontario actually comes from Quebec. It's a huge market, and there's potential all around the world to look at these sorts of things.

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I'm proud to stand up and support the member on all the various aspects that he has mentioned that we need to look at. We need to promote locally and do more to set Ontario front and centre throughout the rest of the world on these small niches, whether it's pickled pumpkins or, as mentioned, some of the squirrels and other things that he spoke about.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** As I've said numerous times now about this bill, I think it's important that we talk about food. I think that the scope should be expanded.

It's clear to me this morning listening to the government side that sometimes maybe we're living in two different realities of Ontario. The member from the government side was talking about the importance of local wines and local beers, which is all very nice and fine, but if you come down to Davenport, where I live, members of my community last night were talking about bedbugs. They're talking about the infestations that are in our community and the fact that there's no money to get rid of these bedbugs, and if they use that money, they've got no money for food. Speaker, that's not just happening in Davenport; that's happening across this city.

They're talking about the real cuts that this government has made to community start-up benefits that would help people actually get rid of bugs and have money for food. They're talking about cuts to special diet. That's what I'm hearing in Davenport, and that's what people are hearing across the city, Speaker. It's not just in Davenport, but in Lawrence Heights and in Don Valley North.

There are people here lining up for food banks. People do not get their cheques until tomorrow, the 26th of the month, and they made a cheque last for 26 days—a \$600 cheque, Speaker. This government is putting this bill at the top of the heap, even though there's no substance to this bill, very little substance to this bill. Meanwhile, 10 years later, people are getting poorer in this province and don't have access to any food.

Speaker, if you go to a food bank—and I would ask the government members to go to a food bank—there are literally problems. People are stampeding to get food for their families. These are the stories that I'm hearing from my friends who work at food banks, who volunteer at food banks. They are worried for their own safety because people are so desperate for any kind of food in this city.

So we hear the government talking about the joys of local wine. People just want something to eat for their families.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sorry; I'm being corrected by the centre desk here. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I thank the members for their comments, and they'll have been duly noted in Hansard.

I know the issue of squirrel was raised again. Depending on what you're eating, it is important to consider the source, consider what nutrients that particular product received or what that particular animal was eating before you eat it. I know the squirrel that I have in my freezer—they dine on hickory nut, sometimes walnut. We have an awful lot of walnut on our farm, the highest-quality protein.

I mentioned that I used to teach agriculture. I also studied agriculture. One of our teachers explained to us that groundhog is one of the best, highest-quality protein you could eat. A groundhog is very selective in their diet. They eat nothing but the finest clover when they're out in a farm.

The member for Oshawa talked about how it's time to harvest wild leeks. My aunt has a cookbook with a number of recipes on how to cook wild leek. I recall one recipe; the first sentence in the recipe was, "First, you take a leek." Then it described what else you do to cook leeks.

I did make mention of tobacco in my presentation, something we grow not only in Norfolk but in Elgin, Oxford, Brant, Middlesex and beyond. Decreasing crop sizes have hit the industry very hard. The present government did nothing to help out. That's why I find it very hard to support this bill.

Challenges remain for farmers: red tape, regulation, electricity costs, the closure of abattoirs, the destruction of Ontario's horse racing industry, the demise of our cattle industry and, again, lack of suitable government programs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to also rise and speak to this bill. I've offered some hits in the House and, similar to this morning, I think what I want to start off with saying is that I'm just really concerned that this bill is a lot of nothing. It says we "may" arrive at some goals and targets and we "may" establish goals and targets to "aspire" to in respect of local food.

They've had 10 years to get this done. What we need is action, and we need to have concrete goals. We need to be doing things that actually help the economy, help the agricultural sector and put people back to work.

The Minister of the Environment rose earlier this morning and was talking about the economic impact. I just find this a little bit interesting, the fact that under his leadership the OTS increased fees, just recently, that most significantly impact the farming community. Tire fees are going from \$100 to \$385 and, for the larger tractor tires, up to \$1,600 per tire. How is that helping farmers? How is that helping the agricultural community?

Again, in this particular case, the environment and the energy ministers have presided over a government that enacted the Green Energy Act, which is allowing great farmland to be taken out of production for wind turbines and solar panels. How is that helping our agricultural sector and our most important commodity, our safe and healthy food?

Within that green energy, they've allowed the energy prices in North America—we are going to have the highest rates of energy in North America here very shortly. How is that helping our economy? How is that helping those 500,000 people who woke up this morning without a job? What we were hoping with a Local Food Act is that they would actually have had some action in that act, not “we want to, we may, we might.” We need some “we will.”

The other thing I would be remiss not to mention—there has been a lot of talk in this House in the last week for certain, and probably the last couple of months, on this gas plant scandal and the billion dollars that will be wasted in that that could have gone to the agricultural sector.

I want to be very specific to my riding. We had a devastating event last year with the frost that impacted the apple harvest and the apple industry across the board. I'm being told by the apple growers' association that a \$25-million investment over seven years would virtually rejuvenate that whole industry and that we would be able to supply every single apple to the Ontario market that's needed. I find it very interesting that we can spend \$85 million or \$275 million on something like the gas plant in the blink of an eye with no thought process, but we can't actually extend it to this very vital industry, which then has a ripple effect to the economy in all of our local areas—\$25 million to do that.

It would make our growers more productive. It would supply the entire market in the province. It would sustain the direct and the many indirect jobs, and it's appalling to me that they can stand in this House and defend a \$275-million overture on one gas plant. We don't even know how big the next one will be and yet they can't do that. But then they bring a bill like this that says we “may” establish goals and targets, and in three years we'll review it. The time for conversations and reviewing and paying consultants on their tab is over. We need to be doing more things to get this back.

My colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk talked a lot about the great things in his riding. I just want to offer a friendly challenge. I think somewhere in there he mentioned that he might have had the best apples in Ontario. I just want to make sure that Meaford, in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, is the centre of the universe when it comes to apples. We are the apple of Ontario, similar to how New York is of the States.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's Algoma? Well, I'm not certain I'm going to cede to Algoma here. I think I'm going to stand up for my folks in Meaford, who do a wonderful job.

We have the Keady market, which, again, attracts people from all over. A lot of people come to our beautiful part of the world, to Sauble Beach, to the Bruce Peninsula, to Meaford to enjoy their holidays, and they travel on Tuesday mornings to the market. I definitely think there's that, and there's the Owen Sound Farmers' Market. There are places like Flesherton and Markdale that have farmers' markets. In my little village that I grew up in, the great village of Hepworth, Ontario, Canada, there's Sinclair's Market Garden that's now, I believe, third generation, and again, the best produce that you can find locally. They do everything on their farm with their own hands, and when you walk in there you can just see the pride in their eyes of producing that for you. Yes, sometimes the odd produce is a little bit more expensive than those grocery market shelves, but you know what? I'm proud to pay that, because that, I know, is supporting a family in my backyard and their children and their grandchildren.

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I think we need to do all we can to support our local markets. I'm not certain that this bill—like many of the bills, unfortunately, that I've had to speak to that have been introduced by the Liberals, it's a lot of smoke and mirrors. There's a lot of vapour in a lot of the things that they do. There's not a great deal of substance.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Walker:** The gas plant; yes, a lot of vapour there—probably about a billion dollars' worth of vapour that will produce no energy for our province. I don't want to get off topic with those boondoggles that they have, because I could be here all day and I wouldn't really be addressing this Local Food Act. We have the eHealth boondoggle, we have the gas plant boondoggle, we have the Ornge boondoggle, and all of this amounts to 600,000 people—or 500,000 people, whichever number; both are horrifying numbers of people—out of work today.

They doubled the debt in the 10 years of their reign of horror—reign of terror—and this bill here is not doing a thing to address that. It's not helping those local people produce more food. It's not allowing them to be more competitive with their local food. All it's doing is a bunch of paper, red tape, and adding to the burden of these poor farmers who need to get out about it.

I want to reflect back—and my staff have done a great job of putting some information together. Back in about 2004, there was a report tabled by the McGuinty government entitled Small, Rural, and Remote Communities: The Anatomy of Risk. This report basically says that everything should be moved into the cities; it should be into those urban spots. They're Liberal anti-farmer policies, such as the hiked tire recycling fees that I've spoken about earlier, the gas tax inequality that's been there for many years—well, who spends more money on gas than rural people, and particularly farmers, who are always on a vehicle of some sort trying to create their crops?—the industrialization of rural land with wind turbines, the decimation of the horse racing industry, the recouping of the BSE payments, skyrocketing hydro and, again, these gas plant scandals.

There's a lack of conviction in this bill. There are no real targets. I've talked, again, about these tire fees. I just can't get past this one, because people in my riding continue to call me. The pending 1,000% hike to these recycling fees on used tires—that's going to hurt farmers, contracting and small business industries all across our great areas.

The inequality with the gas tax: My colleague Mr. Yakabuski from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has brought this to the House seven times; fortunately, the last one, I think we finally won the vote, but will the Liberals ever bring it and truly create equality, which will help those farmers that they so glowingly say they're trying to represent despite having a part-time minister at the helm of that very, very, very important ministry?

I've talked about the hydro hike. We went from a leader, and now we're going to be a leader again. Unfortunately, we're going to be a leader in rates for energy across North America. How is that helping local farmers stay in business or expand their business?

They decimated the small abattoirs. In my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we are the beef capital of the province, probably across Canada. We have Big Bruce in Chesley, Ontario, but you know what? They've decimated the small, little abattoirs, so that has had a huge ramification on our local beef producers to be able to get their animals to market, and to get that to the great market that's out there. We know people want it, because it is the best beef in the world, really. We need to be doing things that are going to actually entitle—one of the members over there continues to say about the positive. You know what? The positive would be if they'd bring legislation that we could support and get behind, so we're actually doing that thing to move our economy forward and helping people get back to work and employment.

I just spoke yesterday with the manager of the Hanover Raceway and was talking again about the mess they've made of the whole horse racing industry. They are going to decimate 60,000 jobs. They've created a situation where that industry is leaving Ontario at a rapid pace, and we may never get it back, despite them trying to put a Band-Aid on it. They have a half-built hall, the Carriage Hall. They put out \$5 million, and it sits there idle because the funding source that they thought they had in good faith was taken away without any consultation.

I just want to summarize by saying that this was a “maybe” bill: “We may set targets. We may set goals. We'll review it in three years.” Well, that's not helping the farmers of today. This isn't ensuring that that next generation wants to step up, buy the farm and continue that proud tradition of so many farming families out there. What we need are concrete targets. We need them to actually step forward. I want to just again put a plug in and challenge the minister in this new budget coming forward that they'll put that \$25 million in to revitalize the apple industry so that that farming community has a future.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm very pleased to have Dawn and Ed Novak here in the Speaker's gallery. They have just received an Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction. They're here at Queen's Park for the day. Welcome.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As has already been noted, I had the honour of presenting the 2013 Attorney General Victim Services Awards of Distinction. I was joined by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the Minister of Research and Innovation and the Minister of Rural Affairs. The Premier dropped in as well, which was quite a surprise for everyone.

In the Speaker's gallery today, we have the awards recipients, and I would like to introduce them at this point in time and thank them for all the hard work that they do on a day-to-day basis for us. We have Barbara Bird and Kaye Torrie from Peterborough, Elizabeth Anne Danowski from Lindsay, Geraldine and Edmund Healey and their daughters Teresa Healey and Sue Massey from Newmarket, Annie Merrell from Kawartha-Haliburton, Nadia Pasquini and Margaret Dovigo from Chaminade College School and students James Mangaliman and Daniel Masangkay of Toronto, as well as Lorris Herenda from Richmond Hill, Nancy Chamberlain from Thunder Bay, Monika Huminuk from Kenora, Peggy Loyie from Fort Frances, Dawn and Ed Novak from Muskoka, as has already been noted, Emilie Crakondji from London, Janice Campbell also from London, Michelle Schryer from Chatham-Kent, Christine Peringer from Perth, and finally Lisa Fox from my home riding of Kingston and the Islands. Congratulations to all of them for their achievements.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I want to take this opportunity as well to extend a special welcome to the Remember Me Homicide Support Group from Newmarket. This was an organization created in recognition and honour of Brenda Healey. A special welcome to her family here today.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to introduce Dan Wickson. He's the president of CEP Local 425G from Stevensville, and he's here today to talk about severance issues.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** It's my pleasure to recognize a former member of this Legislature, the former member from Brant, Ron Johnson, current chair of the College of Trades.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stealing a little of my thunder, but I'll still recognize him.

Further introductions?

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I too want to recognize some of my brothers and sisters who have come up from Stevens-

ville because of a terrible plant closure by an American company. They're up here to share their story with us and to ask for our support. So I want to recognize them, and I want to recognize Dan, who's the president of the union, as well. Thanks for coming up.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It's my pleasure to introduce today Diana Carney, who is the mother of Sophia Carney, who is a page here. Sophia is the daughter of Diana and Mark Carney.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I have the pleasure today to welcome to Queen's Park teachers and two classes from a wonderful school in York West, Cardinal McGuigan. They are slow coming in, but they are sitting on the west side there. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park, and I hope they will enjoy their day here.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in remembrance of the National Day of Mourning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Labour has asked for unanimous consent to wear the pin for the recognition of the National Day of Mourning. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

Further introductions?

Even though my introduction was stepped on, I will still introduce the member from Brantford for the 36th Parliament: Mr. Ron Johnson, former MPP. Welcome, Ron.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### POWER PLANTS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, next week we will be tabling a motion to test whether your government has the confidence of this Legislature. Premier, do you believe, after your decision to spend 275 million tax dollars to save a few Liberal seats, and after the Auditor General has informed Ontarians of the blatant abuse of those tax dollars, that your government deserves the confidence of Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I believe that our government deserves the confidence of the province if we can demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, that we are on a track that is fiscally responsible, that is going to lead to a fairer Ontario. I think that the budget that is being developed right now, in consultation with people from around the province—the Minister of Finance has talked to people all over Ontario about their concerns. I have spoken with both leaders of the opposition parties. I believe that the budget that we will bring forward will be even-handed and will be a testament to our aspirations for the people of Ontario. That, I believe, is what the people of Ontario can have confidence in.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd say a confident government would be happy to have a confidence vote if that were the case. But the Auditor General's report on the cancellation of the Mississauga power plant has made a few facts abundantly clear. Not only do you and your Liberal government use tax dollars for purely partisan purposes, but you spend those tax dollars without any regard for the hard-working people of Ontario who actually earned them. The Auditor General has pointed out countless examples: \$4.2 million spent for land and a warehouse that Ontarians never got back; \$41 million spent for undocumented labour costs. The list goes on and on.

Premier, do you think it's fair to Ontarians who work hard to keep food on the table and keep the lights on to blatantly waste over \$275 million, with absolutely no remorse?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have said repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, that I regret that we are in this situation vis-à-vis the relocation of the gas plants. I regret that we didn't have a better process up front so that a different decision could have been made earlier on, so that there could have been a different community process and so that we wouldn't have been in this situation, which by the way all parties agreed needed to happen, that we would relocate—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to get started right off the bat. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, come to order, and if the Minister of the Environment could save his comments while his Premier is answering, it would be very helpful.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear that I regret that we didn't have a different process and that we have had to take on this situation. Had we had a better process up front, we wouldn't be here.

But the reality is that I've done exactly what I said I was going to do. I said I was committed to being open and transparent, that we would make sure all the documentation—all the questions that were asked were going to be answered. That's what's happening now, Mr. Speaker. That's what the people of Ontario can have confidence in.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, an expression of regret doesn't even begin to answer the concerns of the people of the province of Ontario. Premier, you're at the heart of this scandal. You co-chaired the campaign that decided to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to save a few Liberal seats. You're now the Premier of a government that defends this decision and doesn't really see anything wrong with it.

After the Auditor General's report has made this reckless spending apparent, don't you think it's time that the people of Ontario should actually have a chance to tell you what they think about this?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, two points on that: The people of Ontario and the members in this House will be confronting a budget in the next very short period of time, and they will have an opportunity to express confidence or not in the government. That is the confidence motion that I think we need to focus on.

1040

In terms of the decision to relocate the gas plants, it is very important that the people of Ontario understand that the member who just stood in her place and asked that question was part of a party that campaigned on doing exactly the same thing. She needs to be very clear with the people of Ontario that had they followed through on their campaign promise, they would have had to take the same action—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** They would have had to reverse the decision, and it was exactly—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we heard in the public accounts committee from four former directors of the former Ornge board. They swore in their testimony a particular theme, and it was a theme that has run throughout the committee hearings into the Ornge scandal. It's a theme that was confirmed by the Auditor General, and that theme is that the Ministry of Health failed in its oversight of Ornge.

My question to the Premier is this: Given the testimony consistently that the ministry failed in its oversight, I'd like to know from this Premier what the consequences are in her new Ontario government for ministers and deputies and bureaucrats who don't do their job, and how many more Ornges are there throughout this government?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the Minister of Health will want to comment on the specifics, but I just want to say this: We have said that there needed to be better oversight at Ornge. We have said that there needed to be a better regime of oversight, which is why we introduced legislation to tighten up that oversight, to make sure that the monitoring was in place and to make sure that the rules were much more explicit. That's what the legislation is about. My expectation—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are a couple of members who are maybe playing hide-and-seek with their seating arrangements, but I will still ask them to go sit in their seats so I can tell them to stop heckling. Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville has a comment for me to make?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm glad that the member will not stop.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to try to deal with this in a calm way. I don't need his comments after I finish admonishing him.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My hope is that the member opposite and his party will support the legislation that would actually put that increased regime of oversight in place, because I'm assuming that underpinning his question is a concern about the general approach to oversight that government would take. My hope is then that he will support the legislation that would change the oversight that we've admitted needed to be tighter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I've pointed out before that there's a reason that the A was dropped from the spelling of Ornge, and that's because it stands for accountability.

Well, here is another Ornge the Premier should know about: The Premier should know that the executive officer of the Ontario Public Drug Programs is required by law to issue an annual report detailing Ontario's public drug program.

Well, Speaker, given the track record of her Minister of Health, does it surprise the Premier that there has been no report filed on that program for the last five years? This is a \$3.5-billion program; Ornge was \$150 million.

What excuse for this glaring lack of accountability will the Premier accept from her Minister of Health this time?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our health care system is an excellent health care system. I think all members of this Legislature would agree that Ontario is a great place when it comes to our health care system. I've said before, it is not perfect, but it is excellent. We rely on our health care system for oversight of boards of directors in our hospitals, in various organizations. We rely on those board members to do their job.

What we heard in testimony yesterday from former board members is that they failed in their responsibility to provide appropriate oversight. That's why it's very important that we move ahead with Bill 11—terribly disappointed the members opposite voted against Bill 11. We need to get Bill 11 passed so we can finish the job when it comes to correcting the ship at Ornge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my question was about the minister's oversight. She doesn't even know that that report has been missing for five years. That's why our health care system is in the mess that it's in. I'm asking the minister one more time: Where is the report? Does she even know that the report hasn't been filed for five years?

At a time when we're dealing with chemotherapy problems in this province, the minister stood here and said she didn't know anything about it. She blames the federal government. She's going to look into it.

Now she wants Bill 11. It has nothing to do with the question I asked her.

I say this to the Premier: Given the lack of confidence that the people across this province are showing toward this government, will she respect this place? Will she allow the members of this House to vote on a want-of-confidence motion that we will be tabling early next week?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this has been an interesting series of questions. I'm not quite sure where the member opposite is going with it. But I'll tell you, we will be having a vote of confidence in this Legislature in coming days.

We have a budget that will be before this House. It's a budget that, as we know, serves to continue to strengthen our health care system by investing more in the services that our seniors and our patients need, more in the community sector, more home care. Those are issues that everyday people in this province are very happy to be seeing this government moving on.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. New Democrats have been clear since the throne speech that if we're going to support a budget, it has to create jobs, it has to strengthen health care and it has to make life more affordable. We talked to people about how to attain these goals, and we put realistic, achievable proposals on the table that can deliver results for people who need them.

But that's going to require the Premier to make some pretty serious choices, Speaker. For example, the government is still committed to opening a new tax loophole worth \$1 billion a year—over \$1 billion a year—so that corporations can write off the HST when they entertain their clients. Is the Premier ready to admit that this isn't something that we can afford in this province right now?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the leader of the third party. I appreciate the issues that she has put on the table. I think that the Minister of Finance has said that he is engaging with the federal government on some of the issues that she has raised.

But the overarching reality is that we have a lot of common ground in terms of the direction that we want to go. So the issues that she has put on the table in terms of home care, in terms of auto insurance, in terms of youth unemployment—those are all areas that we're very concerned about, that we are going to move on. My hope is that we'll be able to find common cause on those issues, because they are issues, I believe, that should be shared by all of the parties in this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** These are tough times for the government; there's no doubt. But they're also very

tough times for the families of Ontario. They want to know why they're going to be asked to pay more and expect less while their government creates \$1 billion worth of new tax loopholes for some of the biggest corporations in the province. Is the Premier still going to go ahead with letting corporations write off the HST at the same time that she'll be asking people to pay more?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What we're going to go ahead with, as we've talked about in the last few days, is 46,000 people getting more home care. We really believe that that is the kind of issue, that's the kind of concern, that people share every single day. That's the kind of concern that affects people's lives every day.

I understand that there are concerns about the particular financial regime. I know that the Minister of Finance has been in touch with the federal government. There are things that we have control of, and there are others that we don't, Mr. Speaker, but we want to have a fair tax regime, obviously. That is work that the Minister of Finance is involved in.

**1050**

But at the same time, we have to continue to do what we can as a province to make people's lives better, to make sure they get the home care that they need, to make sure that they get the physiotherapy that they need, particularly our seniors, which is why we are changing the way that physiotherapy will be delivered. Those are concerns that affect people every single day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, people are making it pretty clear that they want to see some change. For years, they've heard Liberals and Conservatives promise that tax cuts for Ontario's largest corporations were going to create jobs in this province, that six-figure pay hikes for CEOs in hospitals would make patients healthier, that bigger profits at insurance companies would trickle down to the drivers of this province. Speaker, they have not seen the results. Instead, they have been falling further and further and further behind.

They want to know why the Premier would hand Ontario's largest corporations a tax break while asking them to pay more and to expect less. Can the Premier explain this, Speaker?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. The leader of the third party knows all too well that this is not a loophole. This isn't new news. These are restricted input tax credits, tax credits that were part of our tax plan for jobs and growth in 2009. We're working very closely with the federal government. We introduced this as a meaningful reform to Ontario's tax system. These restrictions were to be phased out by 2015 and will be fully phased out by 2018—all part of our value-added tax system.

What's important here is that we continue to find ways to make our companies more productive, ensure that they do get the value that they provide. But at the same time, we have to take precautions to ensure that everyone pays

their fair share and that the people of Ontario are protected. So we will continue to move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We've asked the federal government to work with us to ensure that any situations that are provided—the loopholes that we're looking at are the ones that are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:**—avoiding to pay taxes, and they're the ones that we have to go after. In this case, we will continue to collaborate with the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock for a minute.

Just a reminder to all members: When I stand, you sit. Your microphone gets turned off anyway, just to let you know.

New question.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What's not new news is that Liberals and Tories favour corporate tax cuts instead of giving families a break. That's what's not new news.

My next question is to the Premier. We know over here that Ontario can do better, and we've put forward some simple, achievable solutions that will take some small steps to get us there. But it's going to require the Premier to make some choices. It's time to say that we can't afford another round of corporate tax giveaways or seven-figure salaries for CEOs in the public sector.

Will the Premier make it clear in the budget that she's not going to ask people to pay more while those who need help the least get yet another break?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to come at this a different way. I really believe that one of the underlying assumptions of the question from the leader of the third party is that there is a clear distinction between business and ordinary people and that somehow those are opposing ideas; they're not. Ordinary people have jobs, Mr. Speaker. The reason we have to introduce a balanced budget and that we have to put initiatives in place to make sure that business and people and the general population do better is that their fates are interconnected. People need jobs, and business needs to be supported in a way that will allow them to create jobs.

So we are going to do everything we can to deal with the loopholes that both the Minister of Finance has talked about and the leader of the third party has talked about. But we're also going to put in place job-creating conditions and supports for people who need them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it has got nothing to do with underlying assumptions. We think it's pretty simple: Ontario families shouldn't be waiting 262 days to get a loved one the home care that they need in this province. Ontario's drivers shouldn't be paying the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country. Over 180,000 young people shouldn't be stuck in their parents' basements wondering if their career is ever going to start.

When it comes to addressing these challenges, the government has tons of excuses and all kinds of caveats, but when it comes to finding money for CEO salary hikes and new tax loopholes worth billions of dollars, it's full steam ahead by the Liberals.

Will the Premier get her priorities straight in the upcoming budget? Simple question.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Here is the fact: What we've said is that the leader of the third party has asked that we put in place a home care regime that would cost \$30 million. We're putting in six times the amount. We're providing home care for thousands more people, and on top of that, we're doing it in a way that's transforming the system.

We're very clear that in order to make the health care system sustainable we need more services delivered in the community, we need more services delivered at home and we need house calls for people who need doctors. So \$185 million is what we've said we are prepared to put into home care. They asked for \$30 million; we're saying that we're going to put in \$185 million. I think our priorities are very clear.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's cold comfort for the people of Ontario who have watched the health care budget double in this province since this government came to power, and they're still not getting the health care that they deserve.

New Democrats have been very clear: We're going to work hard and deliver results for the people who make this province work. That means working hard for real results for them, not vague promises and future conversations. That means making people a priority, not sticking them with the same old status quo.

Can the Premier tell us whether she'll be moving ahead with more plans for CEO salary hikes and tax breaks for Ontario's wealthiest corporations or whether she'll actually put people first in this budget?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our budget is going to be about being fiscally responsible because if we are not fiscally responsible, we will not be able to invest in the services that people need. Our budget is going to be about investing in the future, making sure that people who are waiting for home care get that home care more quickly and that people who are waiting for home care get more support than they are getting right now.

Our budget is going to be about tackling the issue of youth unemployment because I know and everyone in this House knows that it's unacceptable that there are young people who are not able to find jobs, even though they are qualified. Our budget's going to tackle that issue.

Our budget is going to tackle the issue of the fact that auto insurance in Ontario is higher than anywhere else in the country. We're going to tackle that, but we're going to tackle those issues in a way that is practical. We're going to tackle those issues in a way that's doable and

that's going to make people's lives better. That's what we've been doing for nine years, and we're going to continue and leap ahead on that.

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, you talk about being open and transparent in the Legislature, but that's not what's happening over in the justice committee. I want you to listen to this baffle-gab we got from a Liberal staffer when I asked a simple question about a \$712-million offer.

Here's his answer: "What I said to you was that I didn't recall having anything to do with it ... but if your timeline shows differently, then I would have been involved with the discussions on it." Basically what he's saying is: "It wasn't me, but if you have documents that show it was me, then it was me." That's to go along with the 65 times in one hour that that same witness said, "I don't know" or similar words—65 times in one hour.

Premier, why should we ever believe anything from you and your staff again?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm very interested in this whole concept of transparency in front of the committee because I had a chance to follow the proceedings this morning, and those that did on television or who were there will know that this morning the PCs and NDP were trying desperately to ensure that the Leader of the Opposition did not appear in front of the committee on Tuesday.

Perhaps in the supplementary the honourable member will be able to stand up and confirm whether the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Hudak, will be there because we want to ask him about this brochure that I talked about yesterday, the one that reads: "The only party that will stop the Sherway power plant is the Ontario PC Party. On October 6, vote Ontario PC." We want to know about his analysis and costing, and hear from him, so I hope the honourable member will confirm this in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

1100

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I can tell you that the people of Ontario are absolutely sick and tired of the games that this party is playing. At the justice committee today, Chris Breen from TransCanada, the proponent of the relocated Oakville power plant, confirmed a number of things for us. First of all, he confirmed today that the former energy minister had absolutely no idea of the cancellation of the Oakville power plant. He told us that it was exclusively the Premier's office that told him about the cancellation, and when he went to a meeting with the minister, the minister was shocked that it had been cancelled.

We also heard from him, for the first time in two months—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** With no comment. Carry on, please.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** We heard for the first time from a witness in two months now that the \$712-million offer was made to TransCanada and they did indeed reject it.

So, Premier, I say to you, you are clinging to this \$40-million story when TransCanada rejected \$712 million. How can we ever believe anything you ever say again?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, I think it's worth noting the different story of what's happening through the honourable member's questions and what's happening in front of committee.

The honourable member talks about transparency, and yet when we suggested a special meeting of the committee to hear from the Ontario Power Authority, that member voted against it. When the Premier showed up for a late show, that member chose not to participate. And I couldn't help but notice, when I asked in the supplementary if he would indicate whether the Leader of the Opposition would be there Tuesday, he ignored that request. We have some questions for the Leader of the Opposition. We have questions for an individual who made a YouTube video to talk about his opposition to the plant and the fact that if he had become Premier, he would have done the exact same thing.

We're looking forward to those discussions on Tuesday, and I hope the honourable member will persuade the Leader of the Opposition to be there to answer all those questions.

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier. It's clearer than ever that the government is more interested in protecting Liberal seats than in serious energy planning. In fact, the Liberals ensured that a power plant would go ahead in York region at the same time as they cancelled plants in Oakville and Mississauga. Why did the government cancel power plants where Liberal seats were at risk but pass regulations to ensure that similar projects with similar opposition went ahead in opposition-held ridings?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know, we have made the point many times in this House that there have been many gas plants sited in Ontario, I think 17, and of those, 15 were placed and the process went ahead; for two, the decision was made, agreed to by all of the members in this House, that those locations were not right, and so there were relocations put in place.

I say to the member opposite, we will continue to place energy infrastructure around the province, as is responsible. There needs to be a better process, and these two processes demonstrate there needed to be a better up-front procedure, but we will continue to build energy infrastructure in the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Today, Chris Breen, a representative of TransCanada, said that they found it strange

that the government passed regulations to ensure unpopular plants in northern York went ahead in opposition-held ridings but cancelled two unpopular private power plants in Liberal ridings. It seems strange indeed. Why is this Liberal government more interested in protecting seats than in listening to Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** What I find strange is that the honourable member failed to acknowledge that his party was out campaigning against the Mississauga plant.

You know, let's talk about the justice committee. Let's talk—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will come to order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Let's talk about Greg Rohn, the Coalition of Homeowners for Intelligent Power, a group in Mississauga that was opposed to the plant. They came in front of the justice committee, and this is what they had to say: Yes, "The NDP were against the plant.... The NDP came in and attended our rally." I can go to someone perhaps a bit more famous—Mayor Hazel McCallion in Mississauga. You know what she told the committee? "The impression that was certainly given beyond a doubt ... I think all parties would have cancelled it; there's no question about it."

How can the honourable member from a party that opposed this plant stand in his seat and ask those types of questions? The simple fact of the matter is, the New Democratic Party was firmly opposed to the Mississauga power plant.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, Ontario has strong economic fundamentals and has weathered the great global recession. We are stronger than ever, but there is more to be done to ensure our economy continues to create good, high-paying jobs.

My constituents of Oak Ridges–Markham are eagerly awaiting the upcoming budget. They are eager to see the new government's plan to balance the budget by 2017-18. They also value investments in infrastructure and initiatives to transform and renew Ontario's essential public services. Could you please update the House on when you will deliver the budget and speak to some of the themes it will address?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you to the industrious member from Oak Ridges–Markham for the question and her tireless efforts to support her constituents.

As I formally announced yesterday, Ontario's budget will be introduced on Thursday, May 2. It will be a budget that speaks to the needs of all Ontarians, wherever they may live. It will establish a clear and concise path to balance by 2017-18, and will detail measures to achieve that success and that plan.

It also moves forward on 60% of Don Drummond's recommendations to build on the success of modernizing

Ontario's public service, ensuring that a cost-effective and sustainable manner is proceeded.

Ontario is already ahead of its deficit reduction targets for the fourth year in a row, and I was pleased to announce this past Monday that our updated projection for the last fiscal year has decreased by \$5 billion.

Ontario's budget will also commit to building Ontario's strong economic fundamentals, invest in young people, focus on public transit, and support strong municipal infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Again through you to the Minister of Finance: I am pleased to hear that you plan to introduce a budget that speaks to the needs of all Ontarians. It is important that, as part of this new plan, we hear from all Ontarians.

Ontario is a diverse province that celebrates our unique backgrounds. As we know, this government has made it a priority to reach all Ontarians and act on the concerns and ideas that are voiced. Could you please tell this House how you consulted with Ontarians from across the province in preparation for the budget?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'm pleased to say that Ontario's budget will be among the most widely consulted documents tabled in this House to date. Over the course of these last several months, we have undertaken a wide range of consultations with individuals across the province. In fact, the budget will speak to most of what the members opposite, in both parties, are also looking for, but more importantly, to what the people of Ontario have asked.

We have held eight in-person town halls in nine cities across the region. During these town halls, we have heard from over 300 groups and individuals that expressed their ideas and concerns. And through our digital engagement strategy, we have reached over 600,000 Ontarians in 25 ridings.

Members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs have also undertaken an array of consultations. I thank them, all members from both sides, as well as the members from Oakville, Scarborough–Agincourt, Mississauga East–Cooksville and Vaughan, as well as all the 150 stakeholders who participated in the five cities.

The legislative committee's hard work has been delivered to me in a comprehensive report that documents all opinions after being heard. It will be reflected in Ontario's budget.

## POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is for the Premier. It would seem your government has a case of selective memory when it comes to the cancelled gas plants. Let me give you some examples. Nobody, including two cabinet ministers, can recall a documented \$710-million deal with TransCanada. Somehow, your government forgot to include \$85 million in your original \$190-million costing of the Mississauga gas plant. You apparently couldn't

remember anything despite two former energy ministers admitting under oath that the Mississauga decision was made by the campaign team that you co-chaired. Apparently, a selective memory has never been more convenient.

Premier, the people of Ontario should have confidence in the Office of the Premier. Will you uphold the honour of the office and give us the total cost of the Oakville plant today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, it's one of those where you don't know where to start. First of all, the member from Nipissing has said that he wouldn't believe any figures that we came out with anyway, so we asked the Auditor General to look into it. That wasn't good enough, the fact that we have an officer of the Legislature, so we came forward to the committee yesterday and asked to have a special session with the Ontario Power Authority, where they could ask numerous technical questions and get into as much detail as possible.

1110

Once again, I wanted to know if there was something wrong with my television. I saw the opposition vote against it. Instead, they spent today, the NDP and the Conservatives, trying to work behind the scenes to make sure that the Leader of the Opposition would not come forward.

If you want to talk about collective amnesia, it's the fact that the party over there has forgotten that they firmly opposed this gas plant in the last election. They would have done exactly the same thing had they formed government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Premier, I ask about the honour of the office, you send out the second string and say, "Let them eat cake."

Back to you, Premier: Let's be honest. You do know the full cost of the gas plants. The Auditor General has testified that you have all the information you need. You know the costs now and you knew them then.

What's worse than your willful ignorance is your refusal to take ownership and correct the record following the Auditor General's report proving this government lowballed the cost of Mississauga.

Premier, this behaviour is insulting to me; it's insulting to the opposition; it's insulting to the people of Ontario. The truth is not a luxury; the Ontario people deserve to have it. Will you stop the deception and give us the totals of the gas plant—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Attorney General, come to order.

The member will withdraw.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we have asked the Auditor General, who is an officer of the Legislature, to report to the committee. The member speaks about what's happened with the gas plants and what the cost and figures are.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Both of you need to stop.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, as I have noted many times in this Legislature, his leader and his party opposed the gas plants. They sent out tweets; they sent out press releases; they made YouTube videos; they had robocalls. They passed out pamphlets to the people within the riding.

The fact of the matter is, we would like to know about the cost analysis of that party. We would like to know about the types of detailed work and study that they're asking if we had undertaken; well, the same questions hopefully will be asked by them.

Mr. Speaker, I hasten to observe that not a single member has confirmed whether the Leader of the Opposition will be there next Tuesday, despite the machinations of the PC and the NDP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to mention this again. When members are answering, I'm hearing heckling from the same side, which only provokes, and when I hear some questions being put, I hear some heckling which does not help the matter either. Then I follow up with—then it gets between banter between members that has nothing to do with the question or the answer.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke not to make comments while I'm speaking. I am getting frustrated with the amount of—shall I call it "talkback"?—when I'm trying to do the job that I'm supposed to do. It's not helpful.

I'm going to ask us to kind of tone it up instead of going to the bottom.

New question.

## PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the Premier. On January 16, more than 100 people lost their jobs when a US-owned Vertis Communications company abruptly closed in Fort Erie. Many of those workers are here in the gallery today.

Since then, they've been fighting to get \$2.4 million worth of pension plans, benefits and severance packages that they are owed. But because Vertis Communications filed for bankruptcy protection in the US, the federal Wage Earner Protection Program does not apply to them.

What does the Liberal government intend to do about this deplorable situation for these Ontario workers?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member for the question. I share the member's concerns and the frustration of the workers from the Stevensville plant. Any time someone loses a job, any time a plant closes, it is difficult for the worker, it is extremely difficult for their family and it's a huge concern for the whole community.

The federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over bankruptcies and insolvencies, and we have made our government's position very clear to them. The federal government's inaction on this issue is unacceptable. It should make no difference whether the bankruptcy happens in Canada or south of the border. These workers deserve fairness and access to the same rights as any other worker in Ontario.

I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing this issue forward, and the member from Niagara Falls, who has been working very closely with me to ensure that we find some help and some resolution to the plight of the workers in Stevensville.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Back to the Premier: It's clear that the federal program does not cover these workers in this particular situation. We're talking about 100 workers, some of them the wife and the husband working at this company. They gave their lives to this company—some more than 35 years. Now they're being short-changed \$2.4 million in severance, in benefits and in pension plan contributions. The provincial government is responsible for ensuring that workers get the severance that is rightfully theirs.

Premier, you have to fix this. You have a responsibility to act. What are you going to do to fix this problem for these workers?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I have to make it very clear: I've been working very closely with the local union leadership, and I welcome them here today. I, along with three previous Ministers of Labour, have written to the federal government asking them to broaden the scope of the Wage Earner Protection Program. My focus is on making sure that this does not happen to another worker in Ontario.

Just three weeks into my role as minister, I was speaking to the MPP from Niagara Falls on this matter. On March 4, I spoke with CEP local and national union representatives. On March 6, I wrote to the federal Minister of Labour, Lisa Raitt, urging the federal government to close this loophole.

We will continue to work to ensure that the federal government takes concrete action to protect workers like the ones from Stevensville's plant so that all workers from Ontario are protected and that their rightful severance is protected under the law.

#### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm really pleased that I'm able to follow my colleague from the third party on the same subject. Dan Wickson, who is here and who is the president—I'm glad that you've taken time, and I know some of the members have.

Listen, this is absolutely disgusting: 100 workers, brothers and sisters of mine, and an American company that decides to file bankruptcy in United States and then sells their assets to another American company that comes in and closes the plant. I've stood on the picket line with the workers. I've been to the media, and the real crux of this is that we need to have some changes with the provincial and federal government, particularly in the area of the Bankruptcy Act, so that the act says that if you file the American side, it's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** —on the Canadian side.

Through you to the Minister: Can you just comment on some of the things that we've been trying to do, not only for these workers but for workers in the future, so this doesn't happen again?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I really want to commend the member from Niagara Falls. From the moment that I became Minister of Labour, he's been working along with me to find solutions to this very serious problem. He has been able to bring the local representatives and been able to bring national representatives so that we can find practical solutions. Talk is cheap in these kinds of things because there are 100 families that are involved in this scenario, and we need to find concrete solutions. That's why I've taken action on this from the very first day, urging the federal government to step up to the plate, do the right thing, broaden the scope of the Wage Earner Protection Program and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Thank you.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, this is obviously difficult for the workers. It's difficult for the families and of course it's a challenge for the community. I will continue to work along with the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Welland so that we can all collectively work and ensure the federal government does the right thing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** My supplementary question is to the Minister of Labour as well. You know—this isn't in my notes. It's absolutely disgusting. These people take the time to come here—I thank you for doing that—and then we sit here and argue back and forth. I'm not special. I have spent time at the demonstrations you've had. Dan, you know that.

It's absolutely disgusting when an American company can lay charges against the workers and drag them into court because they say that they have trespassed by demonstrating in front of the plant to let them know. I attended the court hearings with them to show my support. We were able to accomplish some things and put some things on hold.

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This government is, and I am, trying to find a solution. We can heckle back and forth—

**Mr. Rick Bartolucci:** That doesn't help.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** That doesn't help. To the workers—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** It's not about pensions. Listen up. It's not about pensions. Jeez.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Niagara Falls—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. The member—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Thank you. The member from Niagara Falls will withdraw. He has said something unparliamentary.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I certainly will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And I would ask all the armchair people to kind of let me do my job.

The member has put his question. The Minister of Labour will answer.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** You can see the passion in the member from Niagara Falls. That is the passion he has brought on this file. It is evident here today, and I thank him for his representation for this community.

Speaker, I want to tell you what I've asked, specifically, of the federal Minister of Labour, Lisa Raitt, in my letter to her on March 6. I specifically have asked her to expand the scope of the Wage Earner Protection Program beyond bankruptcies and receiverships to include all situations when a company closes and fails to pay money owed to its workers. In addition, I have asked the minister to review the cap on this program and give consideration to extending secured-creditor status to workers who are owed termination and severance pay.

I will continue to press upon the federal minister that these changes be brought forward. I ask other parties to call upon their colleagues as well, in all three parties, so these changes can be made.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** My question is to the minister who thinks he's responsible for the Pan Am Games—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's an example of the things I've been trying to ask us to avoid, and that is the race to the bottom instead of the race to the top. The member will identify the appropriate minister in the appropriate manner.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

What does an English and philosophy degree, contributing multiple thousand-dollar donations to the Liberal Party, getting a job from family friend Jean Chrétien and volunteering in Liberal election campaigns get you? For Paul Genest, it means a plum patronage appointment as deputy minister responsible for the Pan Am secretariat. He must be an excellent friend, for sure. This Liberal

love has landed him salary increases totalling 140% over the past three years. He's making \$361,000 on the public dime for a duplicated Pan Am structure.

Minister, are you running this file, or is the file running you?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member from Barrie for asking the question.

Our government does not set compensation schedules for the Pan Am Games; TO2015 does. The compensation schedule and structure is well within the standard of other games, like other previous Pan Am Games, Commonwealth Games and the Vancouver Olympic games. It is well within the 15% threshold of the cost of staging the games.

Allow me to give you another example here. The Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, while smaller than our Pan Am Games, hired 4,000 people come game time. We plan to hire 400 people come game time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, an answer to the question would be great.

There's never been a clearer case of blatant nepotism than this secretariat's deputy minister appointment. I've looked at the other secretariat management appointments to see if these heavy 140% raises are typical for this duplicate bureaucracy or if there's just something especially Liberal about this deputy minister. I found that these managers only received 1% to 18% increases over the same period of time, but it gets better: None of them had a history of personally pandering to the Liberal Party of Ontario. I'm sure Mr. Genest has not performed 120% better than his peers. Even they will tell you that in brown envelopes to our office, but so will the fact that there's no justification for this Pan Am duplicate bureaucracy.

Minister, do you think it's appropriate that a well-established Liberal partisan lead this duplicate bureaucracy?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much for the question. I know the member opposite attacks the people who are running the Pan Am Games. Now he's attacking public servants who look after the Pan Am Games.

Toronto 2015 is a non-profit corporation responsible for the planning, organizing and staging of the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games. The Pan/Parapan American Games secretariat is responsible for providing provincial oversight of game preparation and coordination of provincial services. They are helping make sure our dollars are spent efficiently and for maximum impact.

The federal government created their own secretariat within Sport Canada to oversee the investment in these games. The Vancouver and London Olympics also had government secretariats to oversee public investment in those games. It is the normal—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Premier. Folks in London see a real disconnect between the priorities of this government and their own priorities. Londoners hear that this government spent \$250 million to cancel a gas plant to help the Liberal Party win an election. They witness a staggering local unemployment rate of 9.6%. More layoffs are expected to front-line workers in London hospitals, leading to less service for people who need it.

My question to the Premier: Why are Londoners being shortchanged while this Liberal government wastes hundreds of millions of dollars to save a couple of seats?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to talk about what's happening in our health care system right now in London, Ontario, because it's an example of the significant improvements that are happening in our health care system. In fact, Speaker, this morning I had the opportunity of sending greetings to a conference of the South West CCAC—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** How's that hospital in Grimsby coming?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. No, no, sorry. Keep going.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, this is the last time. The next one is a warning, which follows something else—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And I also want to remind the Minister of the Environment: He's not helping when he provokes.

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, thanks to the investments that we have made in community care and home care and thanks to the very excellent work that is being done in the community sector, the ALC rate, the alternate-level-of-care rate at London Health Sciences Centre has dropped an astonishing 71%.

We are transforming our health care system. We are shifting resources to the community. I think the member opposite should pay a visit to the CCAC and see what our investments are actually doing for people in her community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Again to the Premier: Over a quarter of a billion dollars was wasted to cancel this gas plant so the Liberals could keep a few seats, and what the people in London hear about, in terms of support from this government is that the southwestern economic development fund is still not functioning despite the desperate need for jobs in the region. The London Catholic school board will cut 10% of teachers despite a 5% decline in enrolment.

My question is very simple: Why is this government ignoring Londoners while working for its own political gain?

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, Speaker, I simply have to disagree with the member opposite. Maybe she could look at what we've done for wait times when it comes to cataract surgery. St. Joseph's Health Centre—cataract surgery is 384 days less than it was. That's over a year that has been taken off the wait time for cataract surgeries.

We've seen a reduction in wait times for cancer surgery, and we all know, when people are waiting for cancer surgery, that we want to make that wait time as short as possible. We've taken 32 days off that wait time. We've reduced CT scan wait times by 56 days and MRI wait times by 135 days.

Speaker, these changes are happening because of the strategic investments that are being made in our health care system, investments that benefit the people the member opposite represents.

## PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I have a real question for the minister responsible—the wonderful minister responsible—for the 2015 Pan Am Games. People in my riding of Brampton West are excited about projects that are under way across the province in preparation for the upcoming games in 2015.

I heard recently that the president of the Pan American Sports Organization visited Ontario as part of a four-day tour that included a stop in Toronto's West Don Lands, where the future athletes' village will be located. The athletes' village, and other Pan Am venues, are certainly a wonderful opportunity to showcase Ontario.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What else can the government tell us about the facility and the Pan American Sports Organization's recent visit to Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the member from Brampton West for asking the question. I think he's a member who understands the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. I'm proud to quote the PASO president, who said last week that Ontario's games in 2015 will be "the best ever."

During the games, the athletes' village will be home to about 10,000 athletes and team officials. Once the games are concluded, the village will become a new, friendly community that will include 1,000 units for lower-income families, a new YMCA, and George Brown College's first student residence. This one venue alone is creating over 5,000 jobs for Ontario's economy.

Ontario is proud to be hosting the games and delivering an exceptional experience for athletes and visitors alike.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Back to the minister: The games will attract as many as 250,000 visitors from all over the world who will stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants and shop in our stores. The upcoming games have proven to be a catalyst for economic, social, infrastructure and athletic development in Ontario and will leave a legacy

of new and improved sport and recreation facilities for years to come.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What else should we know about the upcoming 2015 Pan Am Games, and what other exciting news can I share with my constituents?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the question. It is because Ontario won the games bid that the federal government is investing \$500 million in sports infrastructure to support our province. For that, I want to say thank you.

Speaking of infrastructure, the CEO of TO2015 recently pointed out that it will be worth the investment, saying that the games “will stop the nation and show what we are capable of.”

I want to thank everyone who has been working so hard to bring the games to Ontario. I'm also happy to inform the House that we now have six designs for the games' official mascot, submitted from kids across Canada. I encourage all the members, and all Ontarians, to pick a favourite mascot by voting online next month until May 5.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is to the Premier. I rise today to address a very important matter that a number of northern communities are facing. Retroactive assessment by the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. has threatened to bankrupt a number of our northern communities. Fort Frances, Dryden, Espanola and the township of James have all been hit hard with reassessments that have come out of the blue. Despite significant pressure from these communities, your government has remained silent.

Premier, do you agree that these northern communities deserve an answer today on what you are doing to keep them from going bankrupt?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank the member for the question. Certainly while I was at the ROMA/OGRA conference in February and with meetings with AMO, they have raised this issue with me and about the potential impacts on municipalities across the province. Certainly I understand, as a former municipal councillor, that the impact of any changes to property assessments on municipalities is alarming.

Although I can't comment on any specific case that is before the Assessment Review Board, I want to assure our municipal partners that we hear the concerns of municipalities about those assessment changes. My ministry is working with the Ministry of Finance to evaluate the issues surrounding the assessments of large industrial properties, be they mills or other facilities. We recognize the importance of the economic viability of our small municipalities, especially in the north, and our ministry is working closely with those municipalities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Premier. Premier, this issue is of critical importance to northern communities.

Dryden, Espanola, Fort Frances and the township of James cannot afford the financial hit they're facing.

Northern mayors are very frustrated with the process, especially the retroactive nature of it. They feel like they've been blindsided. I spoke with Reeve Terry Fiset from the township of James, and his frustration was clear. After meeting with your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and writing letters to you, action has still not been taken to address the MPAC recalculation that threatens to bankrupt them. The municipality has already been forced to spend over a quarter of a million dollars in legal fees that cannot be recovered just to fight this.

Premier, what do you expect these municipalities to do in response to MPAC's recalculations?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** We recognize that there continues to be a need for an ongoing discussion with our partners, particularly those who are experiencing challenging fiscal circumstances. That is why the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and staff from my Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be meeting with representatives from James, Espanola, Dryden, Fort Frances and other municipalities on Monday, April 29 to discuss this pressing issue. We're committed to that ongoing conversation and to working with the parties to ensure that all communities across this province are able to succeed and prosper.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Premier. Small municipalities are facing dire situations as a result of the increasing costs of providing clean water and the disappearance of the Ontario Small Waterworks Assistance Program.

Ontario has a network of safeguards and oversight measures to ensure that a tragedy like Walkerton will never happen again. Out of the Walkerton inquiry, Justice O'Connor made recommendations for improving Ontario's drinking water, but now the cost of meeting these requirements has been shifted to the backs of taxpayers in smaller communities. Will the Liberal government commit to finding solutions to help communities with a small user base provide clean and affordable drinking water?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of the Environment.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Drinking water, as you know—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's okay, Minister, I'm giving you a chance to—I've stopped the clock. Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The quality of water in the province is always important, whether it's in northern Ontario or southern Ontario, and I want to assure the member that the Ministry of the Environment and other ministries which have similar responsibilities are doing everything possible to ensure that the quality of drinking water is excellent in this province. You will know, for

instance, that yesterday the Premier of this province saved, in fact, the Experimental Lakes in northwestern Ontario. Marvelous work was being done there by scientists, some of them residing in northern Ontario, some of them from the province of Manitoba, a world-class operation that the Premier announced yesterday that instead of having that operation close, the Ontario government was intervening to ensure that that operation would continue and that we would continue to have the experiments needed to keep the quality of our water at the very highest.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question again is to the Premier. My focus is on small communities. Small communities across the province face unique challenges with the financial sustainability and affordability of their drinking water systems, but the last wave of OSWAP applications ended in February 2012. This funding is depended upon by small municipalities to help alleviate the costs of public drinking water systems. The community members of Assiginack on Manitoulin Island have been notified of a 41% increase in water rates for the coming year, and the township of the North Shore has been facing similar problems for the past 10 years.

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Will the government commit to continuing OSWAP funding so that all Ontarians, even those in small, rural communities, have equal, affordable access to clean drinking water?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member for raising that. We have a number of programs through Infrastructure Ontario, including a loan program, as well as the MIII program, which is \$90 million to help municipalities with very small tax bases on basic infrastructure.

I am quite happy to work with the Minister of the Environment and the member opposite to try to find some funding—this is funding for urgent, critical issues. We can appreciate the concern of communities that need access to drinking water when they don't have the infrastructure that's sufficient. I will make a commitment to meet with the member right away and work with him to solve his problem. I thank him for raising it.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Premier on a point of order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to correct my record. I said that 15 of 17 gas plants were sited since 2003. It's actually 17 of 19 that have been sited.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on a point of order.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** With your indulgence, I would like to introduce a constituent of mine, Diana Carney, who is here today. She's the mother of Sophia Carney, who is a co-captain today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence as well, I'd like to introduce a mentor, a great friend and a very respected individual: Bud Wildman, the prior MPP for my region.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Another member steals my thunder, but thank you.

We do welcome you.

I will acknowledge again the member from Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Ligia Nobrega. She's the president of the cultural association for April 25, for commemorating the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. She's joined by Carlos Morgadinho and our special guest from Portugal, Colonel Carlos Alberto Évora Maia de Loureiro—where you celebrate your victory against fascism. Thank you so much. Obrigado.

#### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order. Pursuant to standing order 99 with respect to written questions on the order paper, I beg leave to inform the Speaker that the Minister of Agriculture and Food is in breach of the order and has not answered the following order paper question: question number 3, which was filed on February 27, 2013. The question asked the minister to provide a breakdown of advertising done by the ministry over the last four years. We have not received the cost of any of the advertising—not even the total amount for four years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to direct the Minister of Agriculture—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member, you've made your point, and I was standing.

I would ask members to hang on for just a moment because there is a special announcement I have to make after this. One moment, please.

I've checked with the Clerks' table, and my understanding is that questions 1 through 6 have been answered.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** To all honourable members, I need to announce that this is the last day for our pages. I would like us to show our deep appreciation for this wonderful group of people.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands adjourned—

*Interjection.*

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry, yes. I did want to say one more thing. Somebody did step on it, but the Speaker does usually announce when former members are here: Mr. Bud Wildman from Algoma, for the 31st to the 36th Parliaments. We thank the member. He's in the west gallery.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from London–Fanshawe on a point of order.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to correct my record. In my question, I said that the cost was \$250 million, and the correct cost is \$275 million.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Essex on a point of order.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my member's statement, I spoke about 10-year-old Kaidyn Blair, who was encouraging people to sign up for organ donations. I stated that to date he has registered 243 people; in fact, it is 403 people, which is an enormous thing, so I wanted to correct that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** You're only as good as the people that work with you, so I'd like to welcome my constituency office manager, Karen Contestabile, here today.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Joining us in the west members' gallery are two volunteers from my constituency office, Atifat Ashraf and Samantha Ho, with my executive assistant Gary Milakovic.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## KATE'S KAUSE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I rise in the House today to congratulate the amazing work of our local Elmira Kiwanis Club, and Kelly Meissner, the lead advocate of a local charity called Kate's Kause. Kelly is the mother of two-year-old Kate, who was born with Angelman syndrome. "Angels," as we call them, have cheerful personalities but struggle with many day-to-day activities we take for granted, like personal care, sleeping, verbal communication and walking.

Following the diagnosis of Kate's condition and wanting her daughter to be able to enjoy the simple pleasures in life, Kelly started raising money to build a fully accessible playground at Gibson Park in Elmira. With both Kelly and the community's efforts, they managed to collect and raise \$450,000 to build a state-of-the-art playground called Kate's Place for Everyone.

I have, in fact, visited Gibson Park with my family, and it is quite the sight to see. In fact, my favourite feature is the roller slide, made specifically for kids with hearing problems. The design prevents static buildups, so children's hearing aids are not affected. Kate and the many other visitors can now play and grow together, allowing kids just to be kids, something that children with disabilities don't always have the opportunity to do. Doctors even say that Kate is walking and talking far sooner than expected for kids with Angelman syndrome.

With spring finally here, I look forward to visiting the playground this weekend, and I encourage everyone from across Ontario to take a look at the Kate's Kause park and come join us as we celebrate the installation of a new sensory wall designed for those with vision problems and a green gym for seniors across our community as well.

## HOCKEY FOR HEALTH

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** This past weekend, I paid a visit to the fifth annual Hockey for Health three-on-three tournament in Kenora. Individuals from across north-western Ontario travelled to Kenora to take part in this very important fundraising event which donated 75% of its proceeds to the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, 15% to the twinning of the Kenora Recreation Centre, and 10% to the Canadian Cancer Society.

The goal for this year's tournament was to raise \$55,000 to be split among the three causes, but I am pleased to report that they exceeded their goal by raising \$66,000 in total. Leading the charge were the novice division Red Lake Ice Diggers, who raised a tournament best of \$11,927.13.

I would like to congratulate all the teams that took part in this very important event, and give very special recognition to those who took part in the Don Your Cherry Jacket Contest, who went the extra mile to raise funds. Grapes himself would have been jealous of the stylish jackets that were brought out for this portion of the fundraiser; and I encourage him, if he's watching today, to see for himself the photos of their fancy threads and to even recognize their efforts on the next Coach's Corner.

On behalf of the community, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Dean Caron and his hard-working team, who made this tournament a resounding success by raising community spirit and much-needed funds for a number of outstanding causes.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** This week is National Volunteer Week, which celebrates the many individuals who give

up their time and whose sense of civic responsibility reminds all of us of the importance of giving back to the community.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize four young people who volunteer in my constituency office in the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham: Atifat Ashraf, Samantha Ho, Yousef Khan and David Nissan. Atifat and Samantha have joined us today.

Atifat is studying for her master's in public policy at the University of Toronto, with the goal of entering public service upon graduation.

Samantha is a graduate of York University's professional writing program and combines her love of social media with culinary arts in her blog, Curiosity to the Oven.

Yousef is a graduate of the University of Toronto and a proud first-generation Canadian. He is thankful for all the opportunities this country provides and hopes to one day become a leader in the public sector.

David is an avid baseball player who holds a master's degree in political communication from the University of Western Ontario.

These young volunteers all live in my riding and brought their own unique perspective to the constituency office. With unfailing reliability, each shared their time and their energy with the people of Oak Ridges–Markham, and I would like to offer them a sincere thank you.

#### HALEIGH WIGGINS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in this House today to recognize and congratulate Haleigh Wiggins on being awarded the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers. She was presented this honour right here at Queen's Park on Monday.

I'm proud to say that Haleigh is from South River, in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. She is currently pursuing her education at Nipissing University, where she is enrolled in the teaching program.

Her commitment and volunteer contribution to Best Buddies Canada has been truly remarkable. Best Buddies Canada is a national charitable organization that pairs people who have intellectual or developmental disabilities with buddies to create friendships and provide the opportunity to share new experiences.

Haleigh has been volunteering her time with Best Buddies Canada for over six years, stretching back to when she was still attending Almaguin Highlands Secondary School, where she served as chapter president.

Haleigh has made a tremendous contribution to the special-needs community and continues to bring enthusiasm to this important cause, even while completing her studies in North Bay. Haleigh's commitment to Best Buddies Canada sets a tremendous example for all of us, and her passion for volunteering cannot be overstated.

Congratulations, Haleigh, on receiving the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers.

#### CLINTON STREET JUNIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A public school in my riding celebrates an important milestone this year: 125 years ago, the Clinton Street public school opened its doors, just north of College Street, welcoming 480 students from the surrounding community.

Over the years, Clinton Street school has taught thousands of children, including alumni such as 60 Minutes anchor Morley Safer; human rights activist Alan Borovoy; Sam Sniderman, better known as Sam the Record Man; Eddie Goodman, whose influence is well-known in this House; and my good friend Howard Moscoe, former city councillor and chair of the Toronto Transit Commission.

At a time of funding cuts to music education, I note with pride that Clinton has also nurtured world-class musical talent. Composer Louis Applebaum attended Clinton; so did Toronto Symphony Orchestra conductor Victor Feldbrill; Zal Yanovsky attended Clinton in the 1950s before co-founding The Lovin' Spoonful with John Sebastian; and Richard Parry went to Clinton as a boy, before moving to Montreal and joining Arcade Fire, whose last record, *The Suburbs*, won the Grammy for Album of the Year in 2011.

The achievements of Clinton Street school alumni demonstrate the impact of high-quality public education in Ontario. They also demonstrate how music education can spark a flame in a child that can take them to Massey Hall, the Lincoln Center and Wembley Stadium.

As a former teacher and school trustee, I believe in public education with all my heart, and Ontario's teachers and educators deserve our everlasting gratitude.

I congratulate Clinton for 125 years of excellence, and I look forward to joining them on May 9 to celebrate this remarkable milestone.

#### McMASTER CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OPHTHALMOLOGY CENTRE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I had the opportunity to visit the McMaster Children's Hospital recently as they celebrated the completion of a \$1.8-million campaign to develop and equip their new pediatric ophthalmology centre.

Thanks to a \$1-million gift from the Hogarth family and Pioneer Energy, the campaign ended on a real success. The new Hogarth Family and Pioneer Energy Ophthalmology Centre is built to serve the unique needs of children and their families. It features state-of-the-art ophthalmology equipment, a clinical layout suited to the needs of children, and child-friendly furnishings to enhance the care and comfort of their young patients.

The new centre is extremely unique. It's the only neonatal ophthalmology screening program in the entire region. It's the only hospital with a pediatric retinal surgeon in the entire region. It offers the only pediatric ophthalmology training program for new doctors in south-central Ontario.

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I had the opportunity to tour the centre in 2011 with Jen Hartman after her daughter Chloe went through the centre, so I know she would like me to thank all of the community and all of the corporate partners who contributed generously to build the new centre and congratulate all of those involved on a very successful campaign that's going to help children in Hamilton and the entire region.

**REG CHAPPELL**

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I rise today to congratulate Newmarket resident Reg Chappell for being recognized as the Ontario male coach of the year. Reg is into his 50th year of coaching, and over those years has inspired and motivated numerous young athletes to become the best they can be. Reg founded the Aurora Swim Club, Master Ducks, the Stouffville Swim Club and the Ducks Swimming Club.

As a national-class coach, Reg has shown national swim qualifiers since 1971, with numerous swimmers qualifying for Olympic trials. Two former age group swimmers went on to make Olympic teams in 1976 and again in 1992. Among the athletes he inspired to achieve their goals was Summer Ashley Mortimer, who won four medals—two gold, one silver and one bronze—at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, where he had the honour of coaching our Canadian swimmers as the Canadian Paralympic coach.

Among his many honours over the years was the Special Achievement Award, bestowed on Reg by the Ontario Swim Coaches Association in 1980, 1985 and 2005.

Speaker, I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Reg Chappell for being named the Ontario male coach of the year.

**DECA INTERNATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to take this time to recognize and congratulate the students of the DECA Club at Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt for their participation in the DECA International Career Development Conference. DECA is an international organization to prepare students for entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, hospitality and management.

Seven years ago, DECA was started at Dr. Norman Bethune high school and grew into a club of almost 200 students. This year, after months of preparation, 13 Bethune students finished in the top five of their events at the DECA provincial competition. These students now have the opportunity to represent their school, Ontario and Canada in Anaheim, California.

The DECA International Career Development Conference is running from April 24 to 27. About 15,000 delegates from around the world come together in com-

petitive events such as oral business case studies, written business plan proposals and leadership development academies. I look forward to hearing of their success at this year's conference.

I want, finally, to acknowledge the leadership of the principal, Sandy Kaskens, and teacher Ms. Krista Yeung for her leadership and hard work in mentoring these young people. It is with great honour that I recognize 13 exceptional young leaders in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. They make us proud.

**HUCK FINN YOUTH FISHING DAY**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This Saturday, April 27, I'm going fishing in Uxbridge. It's the 11th annual Huck Finn Youth Fishing Day at Elgin Park. Highlights include the popular Huck Finn parade, featuring decorated bikes and wagons as well as dozens of Huck Finn look-alikes. There are great prizes for the kids, a free lunch, free bait, as well as rods and reels for novice anglers.

I'd like to thank the principal organizer, Pat Higgins of Uxbridge Canadian Tire, Amanda Ferraro, and the mayor and council of Uxbridge township for keeping me informed on the fishing day events.

Sponsors include Canadian Tire, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Uxbridge township, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Optimist Club, Pickering Rod and Gun Club, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Uxbridge BIA and the Durham regional police.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome all members here from Queen's Park and colleagues and their families to visit Uxbridge on any day, but more particularly to have a fun day fishing in the great outdoors this Saturday morning, April 27. Everyone is welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member is definitely a dead ringer for Huck Finn. Just thought I'd let him know. I listen to the statements.

**NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION**

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Barrie has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and responsible for the Pan/Parapan American Games, concerning the Pan Am Games. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

**MOTIONS****AGGREGATE RESOURCES REVIEW**

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on General Government and that the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this motion without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to revive the review of the Aggregate Resources Act and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to strengthening the act. In developing such recommendations, the committee's focus shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas: the act's consultation process, how siting operations and rehabilitation are addressed in the act, best practices and new developments in the industry, fees, royalties and aggregate resource development and protection, including conservation and recycling.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Milloy moves that the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to revive the review—

**Hon. John Milloy:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense.

All those agreed to the motion—agreed? Agreed.  
*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, this April 28 is a solemn day in Ontario. We will stop to observe in sombre remembrance workers who have been killed or injured on the job. It is our province's official day of mourning. This weekend, people across this province will gather at ceremonies in city squares, union halls and various other locations. Flags will be lowered to half-mast to honour loved ones, co-workers and friends we have lost.

Since the 1980s, the Ontario government has recognized the Day of Mourning. It is a day recognized in cities across Canada and in 80 countries around the world. This year's theme is "Remember. Our movement for change. Train for it. Work for it."

We must remember. We must make sure workers are properly trained, and we must redouble our efforts to protect workers and their families. This is a day to rededicate ourselves to doing whatever it takes to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses and to honour those we have lost and to acknowledge those who are injured. They are our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives and our friends and neighbours. We honour the skill, dedication and commitment they brought to their jobs every day by making sure those who follow have safer workplaces.

Speaker, I'm notified each and every time a worker is injured or killed in our province. This is the toughest part of my job. Most recently, Speaker, an accident occurred just blocks away from my house in Ottawa. No family should ever have to hear that a loved one is not coming home from work.

Thanks to the commitment of those who fight to make workplaces safer, together we are making progress. Workplace injuries have decreased significantly over the last number of years. In construction sites, businesses, hospitals and schools, health and safety advocates are making workplaces safer.

Our government has taken strong steps to reduce and eliminate workplace injuries. We have doubled the number of enforcement officers to make sure employers follow the rules. We have brought enforcement and prevention under the purview of our new chief prevention officer, helping to make sure that injuries do not happen in the first place. We launched the first-ever province-wide occupational safety strategy. It was developed with input from labour, employers, injured workers and community groups to establish clear priorities and rules that will guide our work in the years ahead.

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In addition to these measures, we continue to roll out our comprehensive safety blitzes, focused on identifying hazards before they might harm workers, and ensuring employers are providing proper training for all employees.

During the summer, it's particularly important for us to protect our youth, many of whom are starting new jobs or started their first job this spring. That's why, throughout the spring and summer, health and safety inspectors from the Ministry of Labour will conduct inspections in workplaces where students and young people are employed. Teaching new and young workers the value of workplace health and safety means a generation of safer employees, safer job sites and safer communities.

Remember, when it comes to health and safety, we all have a part to play. It is everyone's responsibility. I encourage all Ontarians to do their part to protect our province's greatest and most precious resource: our people and our workers. Working together, we will keep lowering the injury rates in Ontario workplaces and ensure that Ontario continues to be one of the best and safest places to work in the world.

Speaker, many members are wearing yellow and black ribbons to commemorate the Day of Mourning. I encourage all of us to wear these ribbons over the weekend. The black represents mourning; the yellow represents hope for a safer and brighter future—a future where there are no injuries, where everyone will be able to go home safe and sound and where lives are not at risk.

Let us pay our respects and honour their memories. Let us renew our commitment to ensure a future without workplace injury and illness. We owe the hard-working men and women of this province nothing less.

Speaker, I ask, following responses, that we observe a moment of silence for all those who have suffered a workplace injury or lost his or her life in our province. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister has asked for unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence after the responses. Agreed? Agreed.

Responses?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's an honour to respond on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus.

The National Day of Mourning on Saturday, April 28, is a solid reminder of the lives cut short and the men and women who have been injured in the workplace. Sadly, statistics tell us that in 2011, there were 919 workplace deaths recorded in Canada. In the 19-year period from 1993 to 2011, a total of 17,062 people lost their lives due to work-related causes. This is an average of 898 deaths per year. That's more than two lives lost every day of the year. In 2010, more than 184,000 Ontarians suffered lost-time injuries or illness in the workplace.

Numbers cannot tell the whole story. Behind each of these numbers is a family, a mother, a father, a young person, a member of the family, the circle of friends, co-workers, a business and the community that suffers the loss.

As MPPs, we are often asked to assist constituents seeking help with medical needs and disability claims because they were injured at work or have work-related illnesses. We know workplace injuries leave individuals and families devastated. These are men and women who wanted to be the very best for their families and for their community. These are men, women and young people who took pride in their independence, their dignity and opportunities for the future provided by their jobs, their trade, their profession. They are working hard to achieve these goals. Their loss of life or their injury is tragic for all of the lives they touched and for the broader community.

The National Day of Mourning is a reminder to each of us that we must redirect ourselves to satisfy the safety and the requirements in the workplace so that workers can be assured they will come home to their families at the end of each workday. We want to ensure that workers who leave for their jobs every morning know that they have the knowledge, the training, the equipment, the skills, the experience and supervision essential to a safe workplace.

A safe workplace requires a partnership by all. That participation includes workers, their supervisors, business, unions, health and safety organizations, the medical communities and others—it's all of us. It also includes each of us because we have the responsibility to enact legislation and policy that keeps workplaces safe.

The members will be aware that the National Day of Mourning is observed in 80 countries around the world. The flag at Canadian Parliament buildings will fly at half-mast. In Toronto, the CN Tower will be illuminated in yellow, a colour symbolizing hope, on April 28. In Durham region, I will be attending the Durham Region Labour Council when it pays tribute to fallen workers on April 28 at the workers' memorial located in a parkette on the grounds of the Oshawa city hall.

These ceremonies include all branches of government—the Durham Region Labour Council leading the tribute to fallen workers. The local ceremonies are dozens of memorials and events taking place across Ontario and indeed through all of our ridings.

It is important to remember that lives lost in the workplace, and the many workers who have sustained injuries and illness, must be respected and honoured. That being said, we must also rededicate ourselves to prevention and to ensure a healthy workplace for all Ontarians.

I encourage Ontarians to remember and honour all the lives lost or injuries in the workplace on the National Day of Mourning on April 28, and it's probably a good time to reflect on the hundreds of lives lost in Bangladesh recently. Workplace safety is a responsibility of an entire community.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** This is the second occasion that I've had the honour, as our party's labour critic, to speak on behalf of our party on behalf of injured workers and workers who have been killed on the job. It's an occasion that, obviously, comes with solemn feelings and sadness. It's not one that brings happiness to me and one that I do not look forward to speaking upon.

I still, at this point, do not feel that we've done enough in this province and through this legislative body. I've been here for 18 months and not yet have I seen a bill come forward through this House that would improve the health and safety regulations through the province. I say that sincerely. It's discouraging. It is directly related to the statistics that we stand every year and deliver.

This year, dating to 2012, workplace deaths have jumped 16% in Ontario. Ontario's statistics show that about 377 workers died on the job from occupational disease in the last year, which is an increase of 53 from the previous year. A breakdown of the figures from the Ministry of Labour and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board reveals that job fatalities alone climbed by 11 in the last year, or 15%, to 84. It's unacceptable. There is no one in this chamber here today who can stand in a sincere fashion and say that we are doing enough. We are not.

The minister knows that he has my full support to work with him, hand in glove, every second of the day, to ensure that proper legislation is put forward to enforce current laws and to enact better laws.

I'm pleased that the member opposite raised the issue of the Bangladeshi workers who died last night because it is a cautionary tale and one that I would expect and hope the minister raises soon—he can still do that—that we do not condone any business that degrades its health and safety regulations, whether they be in this province or outside of this jurisdiction. There's a statement, a credo, that's often spoken through injured workers and families of injured workers, that an injury to one is an injury to all. Those Bangladeshi workers, the majority of whom were women garment workers, were forced to go back into that building, were forced to enter into a building where they saw visual cracks, fractures into the structure. They knew it was coming down. There was an order to evacuate the previous day, but yet they were forced to re-enter that unsafe workplace.

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Through this legislative body, we can say quite clearly that we do not condone that type of corporate work. It's terrible, Mr. Speaker.

There are injured workers as well who fall under this category who have seen the degradation of our workplace safety and insurance system to the point where the denial rate of claims in this province has increased about 50%, so there are 50% more denials than there were previously. Vocational rehab has been slashed from 19 months to five months. There's been \$631 million in benefit costs reduction; a 29% reduction in long-term benefits for the permanently disabled.

Now, this would all be well and good if we saw that injury rates and disability rates from workplace accidents were going down, but they aren't. They do not correlate. There are more people being injured and less people being compensated for it. That's a failure in the system that this government absolutely needs to address, and yet we have not seen anything come through this chamber to do it.

So I beg, I plead on behalf of the injured workers, on behalf of workers who have been killed. And I want to recognize some of my colleagues—Takis Escoto, Claudio Cardoso and my cousin Johnny Fostey—who died while at work. I recognize them simply out of the thousands who have died over the years. I'd also recognize those 26 miners from the Westray tragedy who died. We will never forget them.

But it is up to us in this body, in this chamber, to decide ourselves—I've said it before: The rate is zero. The number of fatalities on a job, the only acceptable rate, the target that we should set and can set and deliver the resources to achieve, is zero. It's the only acceptable measure. It sets the tone for our global health and safety standards, and it's one that we can be proud of and one on which I totally deliver all of my efforts to the government, should they decide they want to embark on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements. It is now time for petitions.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize. I did actually write it down.

I would ask now that, through unanimous consent, we all stand and recognize a moment of silence for all of the deceased and injured workers in the province of Ontario.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. It is now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think I am going to change it up, and I want to go to the member from Simcoe–Grey.

### SPRINGWATER PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we oppose the termination of the operating budget for Springwater Provincial Park in Springwater township on March 31, 2013;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We ask that the park remain operating and facilities such as the animal sanctuary, cabins/shelters, playground equipment and ground maintenance remain intact and operating.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

## HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for northern families;

“Whereas the government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that essential goods and services are affordable for all families living in the north and across the province;

“Whereas government policy such as the Green Energy Act, the harmonized sales tax, cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga have caused the price of electricity to artificially increase to the point it is no longer affordable for families or small business;

“Whereas electricity generated and used in north-western Ontario is among the cleanest and cheapest to produce in Canada, yet has been inflated by government policy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To take immediate steps to reduce the price of electricity in the northwest and ensure that residents and businesses have access to energy that properly reflects the price of local generation.”

I support this and will give this to page Amina to deliver.

## FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to look after their sick or injured family members without fearing that they will lose their jobs at such a vulnerable time;

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to spend time looking for a child that has disappeared, or take time off to grieve the death of a child that was murdered without fearing that they will lose their jobs;

“Whereas the federal government has recently extended similar leaves and economic supports to federal employees;

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario families and wish to foster mental and physical well-being by allowing those closest to sick or injured family members the time to provide support free of work-related concerns;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 21, the Leaves to Help Families Act.”

I fully support the petition and I give it to Madelyn.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This petition relates to the Ontario Municipal Board and my private member's bill that has been referred to general government:

“Whereas municipalities are required to produce official plans that are compliant with the Places to Grow Act and the provincial growth plan; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario prescribes population growth and intensification targets through the provincial growth plan that must be met by municipalities; and

“Whereas even if the designated growth and intensification numbers are met, they are deemed to be minimum numbers; and

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board may approve densities to be located in areas not identified in the official plan, resulting in significant additional costs to the municipality because of required changes to long-term infrastructure plans, and also disrupts the character of existing communities;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Preserving Existing Communities Act, 2013 ... that amends the Places to Grow Act, 2005 to provide that a decision made by a municipal council is final and may not be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board if the following conditions are satisfied:

“(1) The decision is to refuse a request to amend the municipality's official plan with respect to land that is designated for one or more of the following: stable residential area and parks and open space.

“(2) The municipal council has passed a resolution stating that the requested official plan amendment would not be in the best interests of the municipality.”

As this is my private member's bill, I affix my signature and I would ask that members help to get that bill into committee very soon.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I sign this on behalf of the over 1,000 dogs that have been killed because of the way they look and not what they've done. I'm going to give it to Amina to be delivered to the table.

#### ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough's oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt's electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities, such as Scarborough–Agincourt, with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

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“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission's report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain, in its entirety, with its north Scarborough neighbours;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I fully support the petition and give it to Theodore.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present my petition from my riding of Durham. The lead petitioner here is Laverne Baron, who represents Model “A” Acres Bed and Breakfast.

The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors

are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems;

“Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in homes operating bed and breakfasts in rural Ontario;

“Whereas private homes that are the sites of bed and breakfasts already have potable drinking water used by the homeowners and their families every day;

“Whereas many of these bed and breakfasts have established the quality of their drinking water through years of regular testing;

“Whereas these home-based businesses are facing high costs” and red tape “to comply with the new requirements of regulation 319/08;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process. Furthermore we, the undersigned, ask that bed and breakfasts operated within a private home with a drinking water supply meeting all the requirements of a private home not be subject to regulation 319/08.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Nicholas, one of the pages, on his last day. Congratulations, Nicholas.

#### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the process popularly known as ‘declawing’ is actually an amputation, that is the equivalent of cutting off a human’s fingers from the knuckle up;

“Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association considers ‘declawing’ to be an unnecessary cosmetic procedure;

“Whereas research has shown that declawing a cat significantly reduces a cat’s quality of life and leads to behavioural and health problems;

“Whereas declawing eliminates a cat’s ability to defend itself when in danger; and

“Whereas the process is considered to be inhumane and is banned in more than 40 countries;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To ban the unnecessary and inhuman procedure known as ‘declawing’ in the province of Ontario.”

I support this and will give this to page Annie to deliver.

#### CHILDREN’S PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the use of psychiatric medication on children especially children in care or provincial custody; and

“Whereas it is an established scientific fact that psychiatric drugs cause shrinkage and related problems to ... the development of the still-developing brain; and

“Whereas it is our responsibility as a society to protect and care for our children;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To create a policy statement discouraging the use of psychiatric drugs on children and send it to all Ontario clinics and mental health care facilities working with children;

“To actively monitor the rate of use of psychiatric drugs on children to ensure that it is going down;

“To amend the professional misconduct regulation under the Medicine Act so that prescribing medication to children where the use of such medication has not been specifically approved by Health Canada for their age group and purpose constitutes professional misconduct, also to alter OHIP practices such that such use is not covered.”

I affix my signature in support.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from the people of the northeast.

“Whereas the Ontario government has made ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas, since October 2009, insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the” people of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Glory to bring it to the Clerk.

#### TIRE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I’m still receiving a lot of petitions signed by people around the province of Ontario, and it starts with, “Stop the tire fee increases.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or \$1,311.24;

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75;

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships;

“Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Please suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship’s fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs.”

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system”—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** That would be good.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Absolutely.

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask page Nicholas, on his last day, to bring it to the Clerk.

#### TIRE DISPOSAL

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present a petition which affects my riding of Durham and I’m reading it on their behalf.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84” and as high as “\$1,311.24;

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge” a minimal fee of “up to \$75;

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealers; and

“Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Please suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship’s fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents, and present it to Kamryn, one of the pages, on her last day here.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT, 2013

#### LOI DE 2013 SUR LES RÉGIMES DE PENSION AGRÉÉS COLLECTIFS

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to require the introduction of legislation to allow for pooled registered pension plans / Projet de loi 50, Loi exigeant la présentation d’un projet de loi afin d’autoriser les régimes de pension agréés collectifs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**1350**

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Before I begin, I would just like to have the members recognize two constituents of mine: Steve Palmer from the Georgina Chamber of Commerce and Munawar Chudary from the Bradford Board of Trade. Thank you for coming.

I am very pleased to speak to this House about the important issue of pooled registered pension plans, or PRPPs. This is an idea that our party proposed in a white paper we issued last year called Paths to Prosperity: Sustainable Retirement Security. Bill 50, we are debating today, would require the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill to establish PRPPs in Ontario within 180 days of receiving royal assent. If this bill passes, it would give the government plenty of time to consult with stakeholders and write a bill that would let people start investing in their own pooled pensions very quickly.

In my remarks, I will address why PRPPs are necessary and how they would work. I will outline the actions taken by the federal government and other provinces, and

I will speak to what small businesses are telling us about PRPPs.

In doing the research for our white paper, one of the key problems we identified is that people in Ontario are not saving enough for their retirements. Only about 40% of Canadians are members of a workplace pension plan. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that 79% of small businesses in Canada don't offer a company pension plan. People can also save on their own through RRSPs, but only about 30% are taking advantage of this.

These rates of savings for retirement are too low, and likely reflect that too many people never learned how to save or the importance of saving. Knowing the best saving options can be difficult, and we as a society need to do a better job of teaching financial literacy in Ontario. People need this knowledge in order to take a greater measure of responsibility for their future, and we know the majority of people are concerned about how ready they are for retirement.

A recent Forum Research survey found that most Canadians lack confidence in their ability to prepare for retirement. Approximately 55% felt that their retirement would not be adequately funded, 37% said it would be and 8% didn't know. This is a huge challenge for individuals who may not have enough to retire on and for governments who may be called upon to help those in need when they retire. In order to encourage all Ontarians to save for retirement, we need to ensure a variety of choices. This is why we are strongly supportive of PRPPs to fill the gap in our retirement system.

I think it is vital to offer people a new savings option, one that is easy to follow and lets people start saving on their own, and it is why we believe that Ontario should immediately start working with the federal government to bring in PRPPs. I applaud the federal government for passing legislation to make it possible for the provinces to implement PRPPs. We salute the federal government for taking this step, and we hope the provinces will follow suit.

Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta have introduced PRPP legislation. Quebec and other provinces plan to do so soon, but for PRPPs to happen, Ontario needs to act. Only 10% of employees are covered by federal pension legislation; 90% of employees are under provincial jurisdiction, with about a third of them in Ontario. Until Ontario acts, it is probably not worthwhile for financial institutions to set up PRPPs.

Unfortunately, the government has shown no interest in providing our citizens with this tool designed for retirement security. PRPPs would be designed to address the gap in the retirement income system by providing a new, accessible, large-scale and low-cost defined contribution option to employers, employees and the self-employed.

PRPPs would create a simple, easy-to-use system for automatic saving. We want to make saving as easy as possible. Having a pension plan through a workplace is a great opportunity for all Ontario workers to automatically

start saving when they start a new job. For anyone who has a pension plan through work, you know how easy it is when you can just check a box and you are instantly in the program. We want to make sure that all Ontarians are saving for retirement, and that includes providing various ways they are able to save.

Self-employed workers who, of course, do not have a company pension plan, would benefit as well through the opportunity to join a pooled pension. PRPPs would also be portable between employers, letting people take their pensions with them if they get a new job. It would also be possible to take PRPPs to other provinces that recognize them. Ontario should work with the federal government to design a strong system and ensure that tax rules allow savers to maximize their returns without unnecessary clawbacks or penalties when they access their money after retirement.

I would like to see a PRPP system that is easy for employers to offer and easy for employees who want to contribute. But some people might ask, "Why not just encourage more savings in RRSPs or group RRSPs?" Fewer than a third of people are currently using RRSPs to save, and pooled pensions offer a strong alternative. Economies of scale would make PRPPs considerably less to administer than is possible through the RRSP process. So there will likely be a fee advantage to offer in the PRPP. Large-scale investment is also possible with PRPPs because of the large pool of investors.

So what do small businesses think of PRPPs? According to a CFIB poll of its own members, 34% have already said they would offer PRPPs, and another 30% would consider it. I believe that if PRPPs were available, other businesses could see the benefits of them and would be encouraged to offer them to their employees. Why? Because it's a competitive advantage. It's a way to attract employees and keep administrative costs for pensions low. Plans would be portable, so employees could move from one job to another with ease. Business contributions to PRPPs would not be required but they could make them voluntarily.

Here's what the CFIB had to say: "PRPPs will be an excellent addition to the retirement savings options for small business owners and their employees. Small firms tell us that the main reasons 80% of them do not have any form of company retirement plan for the business owner or their employees are the costs and administrative burden of offering a plan. If properly implemented by provinces and financial institutions, we expect PRPPs to move the ball forward on both fronts."

Terry Campbell, president of the Canadian Bankers Association, agrees with the CFIB. He said, "PRPPs will make it possible for small and medium-sized businesses to offer to their employees registered pension plans that will be simple to administer. As well, PRPPs will allow self-employed individuals to participate in private sector pension plans for the first time."

I've personally spoken with representatives of some of the large banks and other financial industries. They see PRPPs as an attractive product they want to offer. They

know how difficult it is for people to be able to feel comfortable about saving, to understand what the choices are and to look at some of the obstacles that they have. The PRPP is designed to take away those obstacles, to provide people with an option to save that they can take with them to a new employer or move to a participating province.

**1400**

When it comes to more savings options, I do not see why working people should have to wait. We already allow savings through RRSPs; why not add the option of pooled pensions? To our party, it seems obvious: People are able to be given another tool to save. Pooled pensions would make it easy for workers to save in large pools that could be invested to grow; the larger the pool of investors, the lower the cost of administration. PRPPs would open the door for any employee currently excluded to secure a more stable financial future. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit torn here. I don't want to get in the way of giving somebody an opportunity to provide for their retirement. I think that's motherhood and apple pie; I get that. But this is more of the same from the right wing that we've been hearing for a long time. Rather than saying what this province needs, and what workers across this entire province need, is a mechanism for them to be able to retire by way of a defined pension plan, we should be looking at what we can do in order to make it easier and make it more efficient for people to be able to contribute to some form of defined pension plan similar to the CPP, which we as New Democrats have proposed here in Ontario, called the Ontario pension plan, or some other similar idea would be a good way to go forward.

We could look at ourselves in this Legislature to see how much of a failure the RRSP has been for members of this Legislature. Listen, we used to have what was called a gold-plated pension in this place. I know that Conservatives are interested in bringing back a defined pension plan for members. That's something they've talked to me about on a number of occasions, and I agree. I think all workers in this province, including MPPs and anybody else who works for a living, who has a wage or who has a business and has a wage through doing a business activity should have an opportunity to build a good pension. A defined pension plan has been proven to be the best way to do it.

I agree with one of the arguments she has put forward. People, if left to their own devices, will not put money away for retirement. That is just a known fact; you only have to take a look at the stats across this province, across this country and, I would say, across most of the industrial world. Very few people, if left to their own devices, will ever start putting money away to build a pension plan—RRSP or defined pension plan. When you're 20 years old, you never think that 55 years old is going to come; you never think that 65 years is going to

come. So you think, "That's not important. I have lots of time to build a pension." But we all know that if you don't start saving up for a pension early, you're not going to have a very good pension when you are 55 or 65 years old.

I agree with the concept that we need to find vehicles to give people an ability to provide money on a monthly basis from a young age to be able to build a good pension plan later on in life. But I would argue, as a person who has an RRSP, God no, I don't want to go there. I've seen the vagaries of the market and what it has done to my investments and what it's done to the investments of all the members of this assembly, as it has for all our constituents.

I'll tell you a story of a friend of mine who had just retired for a couple of years. He had a fair amount of money in RRSPs, and he had decided, for whatever reason, to leave his money in a fairly risky type of investment. He was in small caps and different types of things; he was not in bonds or GICs or even the money market. He was essentially in small caps. Well, we had the meltdown that happened, what, three or four years ago—whatever it was. He lost 50% of his investment. The worst part is, he panicked and sold at the low. So he went from being a person who had probably around \$500,000 for his retirement to somebody who only had \$250,000 for his retirement, and it's meant that he now has to make a decision: "Do I sell the cottage, or do I sell the house?" If he hadn't lost that \$250,000, it would be a moot point.

That's part of the problem with an investment-style strategy such as an RRSP. There are years when you make big amounts of money; there's no question. Everybody in this assembly and anybody who has been in RRSPs has had years when they made 10%, 15%; some have done better. But every now and then you get that market adjustment, and whatever you've gained you end up losing. So I personally don't like the idea of an RRSP. As somebody who has been in it for some time now—I've been a member of this assembly for 23 years. We lost our pensions when I got here, after about year six, and we've been on an RRSP plan ever since. What my RRSPs have been able to generate as far as investment is nowhere near what I would get even on a 2% pension plan. If I had a 2% pension here at Queen's Park—let's say we were in the OPS plan and I had a 2% pension, as any other civil servant has in the province of Ontario. The money that has been generated in my RRSPs can never buy me what 2% would have gotten me. So I'm not a big fan.

I understand what the member is trying to do. She's saying that for some this may be the only option. I would argue that there are other options. We should be seriously looking at how we provide the ability for people to get into, as employers and employees, defined pension plans. For example, why don't we allow the ability to pool defined pension plans together so that if you're a small employer of three people or 10 people or 100 people and you don't want to go out and reinvent the wheel and

build some sort of pension plan that could be quite onerous, you say, “Listen, we’ll let you get into a pooled defined pension plan system that’s already set up and all you and your employee have to do is make a contribution”? If the employer is prepared to give 6%, 8% or 10% per year and the employee does the same, they just go into the defined pension plan and build themselves a decent pension for the time of retirement. That would be the smart thing to do.

The problem with the legislation that’s being proposed is that, although it will provide some ability for some people to have some type of pension, it’s really not going to deal with the larger problem, which is that most people, left to their own devices, will not provide for retirement.

I would bet—and I’ll just close on this—that if members had an ability to bring back not even the old members’ pension plan, but just to put us into the OPS pension plan, I think there’s not a member in this House who would not jump at the opportunity to go into a defined pension plan under the OPS, which is 2% per year—far more than we would get with the contributions we’re not getting through RRSPs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We’re kind of hard pressed to identify a challenge that’s more pervasive, that affects more people, than their retirement savings. Here we are, arguably the richest country in the world. Arguably, our generation is economically the most successful, and the vast majority of people are going to retire in poverty.

As people go through the baby boomer generation, people who don’t have pensions, which is two thirds of folks, are going to create an economically consequential situation because the middle-class consumer buying power of people in retirement is quite difficult.

I look at my mother, who’s in her mid-80s now. We had a small family business; there was no pension. My father passed away just past the age of 60. Family income ended much sooner, so now I and my sister support my mom because her pension isn’t enough to even support her in a modest apartment. It’s very hard to see a very dignified person who has worked all their life not having the benefits of a pension plan. No one in her family lived that long, and she’s healthy, thank God. I expect she’ll be around for another 10 or 20 years, God bless, and I hope.

But that’s not fair. For me, who doesn’t have a pension plan, now having to support my mother and children who have some challenges—it’s very hard to sustain yourself. I also am finding that most of us are living longer.

So I want to say to my friend from York–Simcoe that she has my support and I believe the support of most members of our party in this effort. Ms. Munro and I have chatted about this a number of times. She’s shown some really remarkable leadership here and I want to commend her on it. This is a very pragmatic solution, and she mentions the other provinces that have done that. I think this is a good way to go.

I’m also prepared to work with you after today to try and make sure we realize this in law. As you may know, the government put this in the 2012 budget and made a commitment that we would bring something forward on this. You’ve heard me say, Mr. Speaker, a number of times that I think this House is way too partisan, that it prevents us from doing the very practical, good things that all Ontarians who vote for us, whatever party they vote for, send us here to solve, these very practical problems that people have. There are some things that shouldn’t get ideological. We’re all so crowded in the political centre, I find ideology a little humorous. You know, there’s a Monty Python skit in the making for this era of politics, I think. But here’s something very pragmatic.

**1410**

I also want to just acknowledge the comments from my friend from Timiskaming–James Bay, because I totally agree with him.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** James Bay–Timiskaming? Did I get it backwards?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Timmins–James Bay.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Timmins–James Bay. Because they are not either/or issues. He makes the point that while there’s progress here, the big challenge is that this doesn’t work for a lot of folks. Former Minister Duncan, Premier Selinger in Manitoba, Premier Wynne and Premier McGuinty, Premier Dexter in Nova Scotia, and the Premiers in New Brunswick and a lot of Atlantic Canada have been pressing for something that has been a priority for this government and continues to be—I think we are on the same page with the New Democrats on this—that we have to increase CPP contributions.

There was a motion, an attempt made. My friend Paul Moist, the national president of CUPE, did a huge amount of research on how little this would cost us and how much it would mean as far as sustained incomes and dignified retirements for all Canadians. So our government’s view is that we need to do both. We need to have a partnership in this House where we improve CPP conditions to make sure that there isn’t another generation like my mother’s, who fortunately has kids who can support her.

We also think that what the Conservatives are proposing is a positive step forward. So I would like to ask my friends in the official opposition if we cannot move forward. There are a lot of members in your party in different governments who have been very supportive of enhanced CPP payments. We know—and I think the member from Timmins–James Bay made that point—this just simply will not work for the majority of people who don’t have pensions. It’s certainly a positive step forward. I’m hoping all parties will support the member from York–Simcoe’s motion, because it is a constructive thing. If we can just get out of this—that we all have to have it our way all the time. One of the reasons I respect the member from York–Simcoe—I think we’ve developed a very good friendship over the three years I’ve

been here—is that there are many of us in each party who really want to put the public good first. I think in principle we could support enhanced CPP. We can do that in our own interests; we can do that by supporting this.

I'm hoping that maybe one of the things we could commit to the people of Ontario to do is to actually fix, in the next few weeks, this pension issue, once and for all, because I think there are reasonable people in all parties. I'm on the Freedom 155 program. I was very much like the person from Timmins–James Bay. I've been in the private sector a lot of the time in my life. I've owned my own business. I've paid people. If you've been in the private sector, in small business, you know you're the last one to be paid. You pay your employees, you pay your pension contributions, you pay your rent, you do all of those things, and you try not to lose too much sleep and hope that you get that next contract that keeps you flowing. Small business, especially in the last five years, has really struggled through some very dramatic ups and downs. My pension retirement savings were destroyed in the 2008 recession—I launched my business in 2008—eventually recovered, but you can never buy back that; and especially if you're in public life, your reputation is very important, so you live so much in the middle of the law that you overpay your obligations and you don't take risks.

For all of us who are dedicated to public service, this is important. Bill Davis used to say that the one thing you get in public service is—you get little time for your family, your reputation takes a hammering, but you do get a reasonable income and you get a pension, and you'll never have to worry about retiring.

The Harris government, sadly—and this is not an attack on them—in the ideology of the day broke that back, and I think all of us have regretted that. And for those of us in this House who don't have pensions, which is most of us, who are on the Freedom 155 program, I think we know personally the anxiety this means for our families and our friends. So why don't we try to fix this, not just for ourselves, but for everyone?

To my friend Ms. Munro, thank you very much. This is real leadership.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's a pleasure to join the debate kicked off by our member from York–Simcoe, who has really grasped on to this pension thing and taken it as a bit of a religion and on a road show to talk about this.

I would agree, though, that members of the third party and members of the government have probably talked a bit too much about ourselves as members of the Legislature and the fact that we don't have pensions anymore. But that is a fact that I hear often in newsletter responses and things like that from residents in my riding. They all believe that we have these gold-plated pension plans, and we simply don't have them. So let's get that on the record as a fact.

I would just like to address some of the comments made by the member of the third party who spoke earlier.

I mean, defined benefit pension plans at this time simply are not affordable in the province of Ontario, and the government minister who just spoke, as well, talked about the fact that we need to increase the CPP by a point. I think in great times that might be an option here in Ontario, but certainly we're in the midst of a terrible economic crisis in this province right now, a jobs and economy crisis. These aren't the times to be making those kinds of moves. We simply can't afford them when you're running multi-billion dollar deficits year after year. We've seen this government double the debt over the last 10 years. We're paying \$11 billion a year to service that debt in the province. That's money that simply isn't going into our programs and isn't allowing us to improve programs like this.

I would just like to speak to this bill and the PRPP in itself. It's something that I've heard an awful lot about as the small business and red tape critic in the province for the official opposition and in meeting with business owners and with members of the CFIB, like Satinder Chera and Plamen Petkov. Eighty per cent of the small business owners out there don't have a retirement plan in place for their employees. Many of them would like the opportunity to do that, and that's why this PRPP is a great option. We're seeing other western provinces buy into this. As the member said earlier, BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan all have legislation to propose PRPPs for their employees in the province who don't have any kind of retirement savings. Only 40% of Ontario workers—and I believe Ms. Munro mentioned that number earlier—are part of a workplace pension plan, and it is a fact.

While there won't be a wholesale buy-in by all employers out there, there are many who are very interested in providing this type of program for their employees, both to give them some income security and retirement security and to also attract employees to come to their business and stay in their business and have a career. It also has the flexibility that would allow them to take that pension with them if they moved on to another employer who would offer a similar type of advantage for them.

Industry associations in my riding—and I have a perfect example. It's the Prince Edward County Winegrowers Association. A PRPP would be a great example for this type of industry. The wine industry in the county is growing now. It's employing more and more people all the time. If we could restrict some of the red tape that they're facing in that industry, they would grow even more and create hundreds and hundreds of jobs. These county residents deserve a retirement plan, but many of their employers are so burdened by the agricultural red tape that exists out there, they're operating on margins that are far too small for them to offer any kind of pension plan. If PECWA was able to get its members together, though, to form a PRPP, the ability to offer a retirement plan to employees would suddenly become a reality, and these are examples that I'm hearing right across the province.

Over the last year, as I say, I've had a chance to visit 30 different ridings in the province, and different

communities in those ridings, and talk to small business people in those ridings. We need retirement security for all of our business owners in the province.

I think it's time that we moved quickly on this PRPP. I don't think we need to put any attachments on it, like a rise in the CPP, at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have to admit I have some sympathy for the argument that the member from York-Simcoe puts forth in her Bill 50, except I have some concerns.

Some of the concerns were expressed by the member from Prince Edward-Hastings when he said that we cannot afford a defined benefit plan anymore. So while the Minister of Transportation was saying it's neither/or, the member from Prince Edward-Hastings is saying we can't afford the defined plan anymore. The defined plan is where an employer puts a contribution, the worker puts a contribution, and, based on the number of years worked, you get a defined plan at the end of it, which gives you a great deal of financial security at the end of it.

So the concern I have with the arguments a number of Conservatives make, that we cannot any longer afford a defined plan, which almost suggests an attack on the defined plans we already have in the public sector, and presumably the private sector, which suggests we can't afford any defined plan anywhere, private or public—that worries me a great deal, because any other plan is a casino plan. Any other plan is, you are at the mercy of the markets—God bless—and the markets don't give you the return you think you might be getting. Any one moment, any one day, any time of the year, it goes up and it goes down. And if you happen to be retiring at that down period, good luck. But that's the breaks, because that's the kind of plan that we are talking about. So the real problem is that we have pension insecurity in this country and in this province. That's what we have.

1420

Now remember, if you're earning what we earn, our capacity to put money into the RRSP is quite good. So we could put into our RRSP up to \$19,000. Many who have high incomes are actually putting a whole lot of money aside; it reduces their taxable income, and they pay less taxes, socking away a little money for a retirement plan—still the market, still a casino. But at least some of these wealthy individuals are able to put a whole lot of money aside, and that's okay for them. But there are a whole lot of other people who, although they have the tax room, are not using it all up because they don't have the ability to do so. So even though there is room, there is no ability to put extra money into that fund. That's one side of the problem.

The other side of the problem, the bigger one, is that the majority of human beings in this province, in this country, can't even afford to put \$1,000 aside on their RRSP because they don't have any to put aside because they use up all of their income on either paying a

mortgage—assuming they can afford to have a home—or paying the rent and the other necessities that they need. If they don't have a health plan or a dental plan because they don't have such security or such benefits, they've got to pay out of their own shallow pockets to pay for those benefits. The problem is the majority of people don't have the ability to do that.

So some Conservative members suggest that we need to have some plan that allows them to do that. If only they had the money to do that, I suspect they would. The problem isn't that they're not doing it because they don't want to; the problem is they're not doing it because they don't have the money to do it. So while the scheme sounds nice—which is a good benefit for the banks, God bless them, and other insurance companies, God bless them as well, because they would be able to pool all that money, and the banks would have all those extra dollars that they would be able to invest for their shareholders. By the way, the little people would not be good shareholders there because they don't got no money to put in them bags. The shareholders are the ones who have the big bucks. They would benefit because the management fees would be 2% as opposed to the management fees that the CPP charges in its management of its fees. You would erode whatever few benefits get into that plan if the management fees are incredibly high—as we suspect they would be. So some people will benefit to have an extra pool of money to manage.

But overall, the real problem is that we don't have any money left to be able to put into some kind of pool. Unless we look at creating a defined plan for more and more workers, they will be poor, because what you've got at the end of it, if you've been here for 40 years, is a CPP plan, which will give maximum \$10,500, and the old age security, which will give you maximum \$5,000. All you've got at the end of it, if you don't have any other plan, is \$15,000. That ain't very much.

While the suggestion presented here today seems cool, it's not the best possible option we should be working on.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's always a pleasure to follow my friend from Trinity-Spadina, whom I can sum up by saying, "I'd be wealthy if only I could afford it."

Being born between the end of World War II and the mid-1960s makes me a member of North America's largest and best-known demographic group, which is of course the baby boom. We have had hospitals and schools, subdivisions, universities and infrastructure all built for our generation. Now it's time to take some action on our own behalf, and that is to prepare for our retirement. In fact, it's time for other generations to join us and to do likewise.

This bill asks Ontario to introduce a legal framework for a class of defined contribution pension plan called a pooled registered pension plan. Now, what is a pooled registered pension plan? The C.D. Howe Institute called them "RRSPs with a new coat of paint." By that they mean that a pooled registered pension plan isn't a magic

wand, and it's not a panacea. But for the member from York-Simcoe, in fairness, she doesn't represent it as that, and there is, in fact, nothing inherently wrong with nuanced differences between similar classes of products. If it provides more choice for people saving for their retirement or, indeed, encourages young people to start to save at all for their later years—later years that all of us know come sooner than later for you, sooner than you realize—then I have no trouble with this bill.

One way to go beyond an extension of the existing class of pension products, however, would be to do as my friends from Timmins-James Bay and Trinity-Spadina suggest, and that would be to enhance the Canada Pension Plan. While that's not the subject of this bill, I feel that some discussion of the CPP can put the proposal—which has merit—from the member for York-Simcoe in a little bit of perspective.

When the original assumptions underlying the CPP were made, the centennial year in Canada, 1967, was still years away. Indeed, at that time, the Toronto Maple Leafs were still a perennial Stanley Cup contender; now that really was a long time ago. It was reasonably expected back then that a man's expected lifetime would seldom extend beyond a decade past his retirement, and a woman could expect perhaps half a dozen years extra on top of that. However, today, a healthy male ought to enjoy about two decades of productive and active life beyond retirement, women can expect to live into their late eighties and into their nineties, and a child born in this year has about a 50-50 chance of celebrating his or her 100th birthday in good health.

This positions Bill 50 as part of the pension solution mosaic, as I am sure the member intends it, but we do need some options to help us dedicate some of our earnings to saving for our later years, and we need to help young people grasp that a dollar saved early—whether that dollar is in an RRSP or a pooled registered pension plan, whether that dollar is in a tax-free savings account or a brokerage trading account—that early dollar is worth more, many times more, than a dollar saved decades later.

This is not the kind of bill in which we should engage in “you did this on your watch” type of rhetoric or trot out whatever the party mantra of the day is, but it is a bill that's contemplative. It is a very thoughtful bill that allows us to broaden the choices available to people everywhere. It should also be a reason to engage the federal government in discussions on pension reform.

We need all jointly sponsored pension plans to move quickly to 50-50 funding between employers and employees. We need all parties in this Legislature to press the federal government to enhance the Canada Pension Plan and to make the Canada Pension Plan for the 21st century the type of plan we would responsibly design today if we were starting with a clean sheet of paper. We can afford that, and the time to do that is now. We need strong regulatory oversight to ensure that pension plans are not looted by avaricious corporate management, nor plundered by excessive fund administration fees, and not

invested in an unbalanced and excessively risky asset portfolio.

Ontario's 2012 budget proposed the essence of what is in the member's bill, hence I am perfectly willing to support it. It is gratifying to see that the member for York-Simcoe and her party embrace a truly Ontario good idea, and I do hope that this passes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to, first of all, compliment the member from York-Simcoe for bringing up such an important concern that we all share. The solutions are complicated, and I think she has an excellent grasp of the issue.

I think some of the stuff I'm hearing from the third party causes me a great deal of alarm. We should have an honest conversation on this. As many of the people have said, the current reality is that the actuarial assumptions in pensions—all three assumptions are wrong.

**1430**

First of all, life expectancy isn't 74; it's 94. The number of people working at organizations—I worked at General Motors—used to be 25,000 or 30,000. Now it's 5,000. The number of people paying into organizations has totally changed. No company will last 30 years. Look at Research in Motion, Nortel, all those companies. They're downsizing and outsourcing, so there's fewer people paying.

The final assumption is the return on equity. The pension premiums that you pay in are actuarially supposed to be 7%. Nobody is getting 7% now. And it's got to be patient capital, so it's got to be a 1% or 2% return. It's not sustainable. I know we need a new model. In fact, one of the best suggestions I heard was from the Steelworkers union. They have a proposal that I think is important—I think I've mentioned it to Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance, and that is that what we should be doing is allowing an optional Canada pension contribution. It's already a fund. Now, the return on funds basically is leveraged by the size of the fund, and the Canada pension is the most leveraged fund in Canada; it's the largest, most well-resourced fund and the best-managed fund in all of Canada, including all the private sector pensions.

Here's the reality: In Ontario, under the public sector unions—and this is not vilifying them; they did not make the decisions—we owe \$100 billion in liabilities. The teachers' pension plan is short \$40 billion; OMERS and OPSEU are about \$5 billion to \$8 billion short. Every single one of them is not funded. If you look at the public sector settlements, they're all done by factors. I'll give you an example of what a factor is. For a fireman in Ontario it's a 75 factor. That means you start when you're 25. You work for 25 years, so you're 50 years of age then, and you have 25 years of service so you retire at 50, and you get a pension based on a function of your last three years. Their first five years they probably earned \$10,000. They'll get more in their first year than they made in the first 10 years that they worked. It's

simply not sustainable. I'm angry, like everyone else, because I'm probably one of the older ones here. It's sad and tragic. Something should be done about it. But I'll tell you this: We each individually have a collective responsibility. You can't shift it off to some employer, because I'll tell you, no employer is going to last 30 years. Not Research in Motion, not BlackBerry, not any company that you know today will be here in 10 years. Who's going to take the liability then? It won't be the government under the Canada pension benefit act.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Today I am proud to stand in my place to speak in support of a good bill, Bill 50, the Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, put forward by my colleague the member from York-Simcoe. This bill, if passed, will require the Minister of Finance to come forward with enabling legislation in 180 days.

Pooled registration pension plans, or PRPPs, are a new kind of defined contribution pension plan that should be available to employers, employees and the self-employed. The federal government passed the Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act last summer. Now it is up to the Ontario government to allow them to be made available for the benefit of Ontarians.

PRPPs will increase the options available to Ontarians for saving for their retirement. PRPPs provide a new accessible, straightforward and low-cost retirement saving option for employers to offer to their employees. They allow individuals who currently may not participate in a pension plan, such as the self-employed or employees of companies that do not offer a pension plan, to have a pension plan.

In contrast to RRSPs, participants will be able to benefit from the lower investment management costs that result from membership in a large pooled pension plan. And PRPPs are portable, so an employee's accumulated benefits move with the employee from job to job.

Also in contrast to RRSPs, pooled registered pension plans will be subject to a higher standard of financial supervision than RRSPs because of their status as pension plans.

Nonetheless, PRPPs are not meant to replace RRSPs. PRPPs are simply another option that Ontarians can use to help them prepare for independent retirement living.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** First of all, I'd like to commend my colleague the member for York-Simcoe for introducing this modest yet sorely needed piece of legislation.

Ontarians are increasingly worried about their ability to save money for retirement. At the same time, it's harder for governments to ensure that pensions will be there when their citizens need them most. This is also crucial for those in the public sector, as the Liberal government has more than doubled the provincial debt in the last 10 years. It's all about ability to pay.

Pooled pensions are aimed primarily at those working in small to medium-sized businesses, as well as self-

employed individuals. Throughout my previous professional training and development career, spanning over 25 years, I would often tell participants that they must become their own best form of pension plan for their retirement—don't solely rely on your employer, as many will have had several employers during their careers.

That's what I've been practising for many years, since being self-employed. And just for the record, those of us working for the public as MPPs don't receive a pension from the government upon leaving this honourable profession. This bill also presents a way to provide a new option to the pension issue; one that is low-cost for employees and employers, and that allows employees to take their pension with them from job to job.

I feel that this is a reasonable bill for the government to support, because it doesn't tie the hands of the Minister of Finance. It allows the government to consult with groups representing employees, employers and the financial services industry. The minister can decide whether it will be mandatory or voluntary for employers to offer pooled pensions. It's a call to action that puts the ball back in the government's hands.

The government of Canada has already passed legislation, and their pooled pension plan came into effect last December. Ontario cannot afford to be left behind. Therefore, I call on the government to support this bill and help ease the burden on a pension system that is struggling to keep up. If we don't do something, we're going to be looking at people down the road who will have absolutely nothing at all. We need to help them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member for York-Simcoe, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I appreciate the comments made this afternoon by the members for Timmins-James Bay and Prince Edwards-Hastings, the Minister of Transportation, and the members for Trinity-Spadina, Mississauga-Streetsville, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

I have a very brief time to make any response, and there are a couple of things. One of the speakers mentioned the vagaries of the market. Well, it immediately sets in front of my mind some ability to cut out the hills and make the depressions of the valleys go away. I don't think that is a part of life. So while he's talking about economic hills and valleys, that's part of life, and I think it's impossible to take them away.

To those who talked about the question of an enhanced CPP, I don't consider these two to be mutually exclusive, but I do think it's an opportunity for us to jump in and get with the program of the federal government and the other provinces.

I'll finish with a quote. This comes from Greg Farrell, who is the president and chief operating officer of Giant Tiger: "As a private Canadian company operating in a hyper-competitive industry, the challenge of ensuring a secure retirement in the future for our team members is a significant one. It is equally challenging for our team members to save and plan for this inevitable period of

one's life. The introduction of PRPP as a viable, low-cost retirement savings option is a welcomed product to the retirement savings marketplace. Knowing that our team members' retirement savings are being managed with proper levels of risk and reward parameters gives us, as an employer, greater piece of mind in knowing that our team members will be prepared better for their retirement years."

Mr. Speaker, that's why we're here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We'll vote on this at the end of all private members' business.

### HOME CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, Ontario should implement a five-day home care guarantee in order to eliminate the home care wait-list of over 6,000 people and reduce home care wait times that can be in excess of 260 days. The home care guarantee shall be funded by capping hospital CEO salaries and finding administrative and procurement savings in the local health integration networks and the community care access centres.

1440

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Armstrong has moved private member's notice of motion number 19. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. Good afternoon to everyone. As folks know, I put forward a motion to help seniors get home care when they need it, with a guaranteed wait time of five days. This is also one of the key items New Democrats want to see included in the budget that will be tabled in this House on May 2. New Democrats need a guarantee from this government, a guarantee that seniors will finally get what they have been waiting for for far too long.

From nurses to doctors, from ministers to experts, everyone agrees that home care is cost-effective and makes a real difference in the life of seniors, and yet we have a system that's not reflecting that reality. According to Ontario's Auditor General, some Ontarians are waiting as long as 262 days to receive home care services, and currently there are approximately 6,100 Ontarians on a waiting list for home care, Ontarians like Elba, who wrote us. She lives in Toronto and she wrote this:

"I think that the waiting for home care services is [so long] on the hope that people will drop dead while waiting.... It's very terrifying becoming older, weaker and sick in this country. I won't have someone like myself to fight" for me "as I did for my husband."

Women like Elba need to see a real guarantee that they won't be waiting longer than five days when they need home care. That's why I'm putting forward a home care guarantee, to ensure that all seniors, no matter where they live, will have access to home care within five days of being approved for service. This is realistic. This is achievable. This is a step that will make a real difference

in the lives of seniors and their families, and a positive change Ontarians want to see.

A senior that needs home care and is waiting close to a year to get that care is being ignored by this government. What recourse can she take? And what about her family, her daughter, her sister, her son, the people that are taking care of her? How will they handle their own jobs and added responsibility of taking care of their aging loved ones? Many of them are women who are also caring for their school-aged children. We know how much work they put in, and we know that they need our support.

Seniors have worked all their lives for their families and for this province. They deserve enough respect and consideration to provide them with a guarantee of care in their home when they need a hand.

Right now, Ontario seniors and their families have no idea how long they will be forced to wait. For patients released from hospital, the average wait time for home care is more than five days, according to Health Quality Ontario. For those who have not been in hospital but are put on a waiting list for home care in the community, the wait time is less clear. The Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres says most seniors wait an average of one month for care.

The lack of consistent information on expected wait times negatively impacts Ontarians, but even worse is the huge variation in accessibility of care. Depending on where you live in our province, in some communities timely care is available, but in others, sadly, the wait time can be as long as 262 days.

While we know there are 600 seniors on a wait-list for home care, many community care centres do not keep wait-list information, so there are likely other Ontarians who are not being counted and are going without care.

Today, 3,300 Ontarians are waiting for care by a personal support worker. An additional 2,800 Ontarians are waiting for service by therapists such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers.

In the 2011 election campaign, we had committed to clearing the home care wait-list of 10,000 Ontarians. We had estimated that this would have cost \$30 million. Today, we have updated figures on wait-list numbers as well as the cost of clearing this backlog. In order to meet the needs of the 3,300 Ontarians who are waiting for personal support worker care, Ontario needs to invest approximately \$10 million. In order to eliminate the wait-list for the other 2,800 people waiting for other non-nursing, non-personal support worker care, the cost would be \$10 million. Finally, we would create a flexible fund of \$10 million. This \$10 million would address the overruns in cost due to additional needs or to allow community care access centres to meet the five-day guarantee. In total, this commitment would cost \$30 million a year and would allow CCACs to eliminate wait-lists and add capacity to the system so that all Ontarians who need home care receive it within five days. New Democrats want to see the long-standing wait-list for home care cleared. It is up to this Liberal government to work with

community care access centres to remove obstacles to timely care.

This government recently made an announcement concerning home care and community care. They claimed to invest \$260 million and then omitted any details as to where this money will come from. In contrast to this government's announcement, the NDP's proposal is clear on how to pay for guaranteed home care within five days. Our costing has been fully laid out with the help of community care organizations and the latest information available. Our commitment would also cost \$30 million a year and it would allow community care access centres to eliminate the wait-lists and add capacity to the system so that all Ontarians who need home care within five days receive home care.

To pay for this plan we will put a hard cap on hospital CEO salaries, resulting in a savings of \$3.5 million. The other \$27 million can be found through standardizing procurement policies and streamlining administration at Ontario's local health integration networks and CCACs. In Ontario, there continues to be over two dozen hospital CEOs who make more than double the Premier's salary—over \$418,000. In some cases, CEOs within the public health care system are making close to \$1 million a year. These excesses fall on the shoulders of Ontarians who cannot afford to wait.

Irma in Ontario had a loved one receiving home care, and writes, "Based on my experience, I would say that the government was wasting far too much money on management and not spending wisely on ensuring that their clients are getting good care."

We can change this and use the money spent on high salaries of hospital CEOs to help thousands of Ontarians like Irma and her family. There are ways to better spend Ontario's precious health care dollars. In 2010 the Auditor General identified administrative costs at CCACs to be 9% of their total budget. In 2012, Don Drummond identified the potential to find up to \$1 billion in savings in health care, including the LHINs.

New Democrats have a solid, achievable plan to help Ontario seniors get home care when they need it the most. This government, however, continues to falter sadly when it comes to a definite commitment. The details of their home and community care announcement remain unclear, and this government refused to provide a technical briefing by the minister's office that would give us details of that announcement for this public debate. Instead of committing to a guarantee of a five-day maximum wait period, the government's announcements referred to a target of five days. This so-called target makes us believe that they aren't serious about enforcing a guarantee, and their so-called target will only be aimed at patients with complex illnesses and not moderately ill people, who are often forced to wait the longest.

**1450**

It is unclear what is new money and what is simply a re-announcement of already committed money. The government has criticized our costing but we have provided all information on how we got our numbers.

They have not done this at all. It is not fair to ask a senior to wait and wait and wait. They simply cannot afford to wait, nor can their families or their loved ones.

Further, the province cannot afford to spend more money providing inadequate care for seniors when better care can be provided at home. New Democrats' commitment of a five-day guarantee makes sense to seniors, makes sense to their families and makes sense to Ontario.

Now, this Liberal government needs to make sense and to support the five-day home care guarantee that New Democrats have put forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to speak to the private member's motion number 19, presented by the member from London-Fanshawe. Certainly, this transition into home care and away from more expensive care for seniors and others is well under way. It is the right direction to go. It's the action plan for health care; it's what we need to do. So we're moving health services to our communities, where the best quality care can be offered to people closer to home at a lower cost.

I was with Alex Munter at an event in Ottawa two years ago, and about 600 seniors were there. They asked for a show of hands of people who would prefer to be in a hospital or in long-term care or at home. Of course, there wasn't one hand that went up that didn't support staying in their own home. That's where we want to live. So I think that transition to home care is working well. It's the direction that we must go.

That's why our government was pleased to announce just a couple of days ago, on April 23, that we'll be investing \$260 million more in home community care to reduce wait times and provide better care for many people. Of this \$260 million in new funding, we estimate that \$185 million will go towards home care. This will fund more home care for approximately 46,000 more seniors, aligning with our Seniors Strategy, which also calls for increased access to home care.

Just last week our government announced it would be providing more than 200,000 additional seniors and patients with improved access to high-quality physiotherapy, exercise and falls prevention classes. Included here is in-home physiotherapy for 60,000 more seniors and people with mobility issues.

Our government is providing home care for 90,000 more seniors, adding 30,000 more house calls over the next three years. Our home care plan will also allow us to set a five-day wait time target for patients whose complex needs require home care from a nurse or a personal support worker. This will also free up hospital beds, which is already under way in many cities. Certainly in Ottawa, we've made a big dent into that problem, which was a historical problem. It'll create jobs. It'll strengthen the operability of our community care access centres.

Last week, I met with board of directors chair Mike Ennis—he was a former deputy minister here—and CEO Gilles Lanteigne, both from the Champlain Community Care Access Centre. They were very much in favour of

the direction we were going and certainly they'll be welcoming the new investments that the province is going to make. The Champlain CCAC acts as a key entry point to the regional health system, connecting 25,000 patients to a variety of services. Mr. Ennis and Mr. Lanteigne emphasized that home care forms a large part of their service delivery, and is the expanding part. Champlain CCAC service delivery reflects the funding increase to community care access centres since 2003. As a result of a 77% increase in funding to CCACs, our government is providing home care to over 215,000 more Ontarians. While wait times for services, when referred from hospitals, are fairly stable, the wait for care referred from the community is down by over 30%. We will continue to move forward with our action plan and Seniors Strategy, starting by making it easier for people who access community support services to get home care.

Our commitment to investing \$260 million more in home and community care next year and to set a five-day wait time target will happen by getting the best value for taxpayer dollars. Making the right choices as to where to invest to improve care is something we all agree on.

The NDP says that increased capping of hospital CEOs' salaries would provide more funding to improve home and community care, and I think we all agree with that, but we know the difficulties of what doctors get paid and what administration people get paid; we can all feel that those are on the high side, but that's the way it is in Canada. According to the Ontario Hospital Association, capping hospital CEO salaries, as was said by the third party member, would produce \$3.7 million per year. This only represents about 0.002% of hospitals' total expenditures, but it is important dollars, if we could save this.

This year alone, we are already investing over \$167 million more in home and community care. Most importantly, thanks to our government, there is presently no home care wait time for those who need care the most: the acute care.

Our government has set out a holistic and financially sound plan that strives to improve the status quo and will make sure Ontarians get the right care in the right place at the right time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion brought forward by the member from London–Fanshawe concerning the five-day home care guarantee. The member and the third party are calling our attention to the plight of Ontarians who are waiting for home care. As you may know, Mr. Speaker, there are currently approximately 6,000 people in Ontario waiting for home care services. Some Ontarians are left waiting for more than 260 days, or over six months, to access home care.

Clearly, this is not acceptable. The Progressive Conservatives believe that investing in home care is one of the best ways to improve health outcomes for Ontarians.

With good home care, people can stay in their homes and out of hospitals longer. This is good for patients' health because it lowers the risk of being exposed to infections in hospital, among other things. It's certainly good for the budget as well, because with better home care, we should see a reduction in unnecessary and very costly hospital visits.

Investing in home care is especially important for Ontarians living in the north, who experience the longest wait times for home care. It's also an important part of helping our population age. As Ontarians age, we want to maximize their independence by allowing them to stay in their homes for as long as possible. In order to do this, a wide variety of home care services must be made available.

We do agree with the third party that home care in Ontario needs to be augmented to ensure that people can access it in a timely manner, but we are concerned about where to find the funds to realize this goal. The third party has suggested that the funding will come from capping hospital CEO salaries and finding savings in the LHINs, the local health integration networks, and the CCACs, the community care access centres. But small cuts here and there in Ontario's massive health system are not going to be enough to fund such an ambitious—and worthwhile, I would say—goal. We need to look at areas where we can find substantial savings to reinvest in home care services.

That's why the Progressive Conservatives would eliminate the LHINs and the CCACs, which cost millions of dollars to run and prevent the integrated delivery of health care services in the province. Our vision for health care, as set out in our two health care white papers, is to put more money into front-line care and to give patients access to an integrated array of services in their region, with an emphasis on home care. Consultations with health care professionals, administrators and patients have told us that Ontarians want care closer to home. People are happiest and stay healthier longer when they can be in their own home in comfortable surroundings. It's also good news financially, because the costs of home care are far less than the costs of hospital stays, or even long-term-care stays.

The government members have told us with their announcement this week that they're going to invest \$185 million in home care in response to the third party's request for \$30 million. To that, I would say it's simply a hollow promise. I say that because we've heard this government make all kinds of promises in the past about improving health care, and what have we got to show for it? Ornge, eHealth and the list goes on.

In conclusion, I stand in support of the idea of a five-day home care guarantee and will certainly vote in favour of this motion.

**1500**

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Thank you, members of the third party. But I must emphasize my concerns about how this program is going to be implemented and

funded. This is an issue of fundamental importance to Ontarians. We need to make sure that we can actually deliver on this promise. Ontarians are depending on us to do the right thing. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Further debate? The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in support of the motion that was brought forward by the member for London–Fanshawe, because it's a motion that speaks fundamentally to an issue that we know is facing so many Ontarians right now in this province. I appreciate the words of the official opposition and the remarks from their health critic because I think it's clear to everybody, regardless of your political stripe, that there is a crisis in the home care system. The very least we should be doing is not simply making claims that we're going to throw more money at the system but that we're actually going to be dedicated and committed to guaranteeing that a senior citizen or a frail person in Ontario who requires home care, and is assessed and gets that commitment, actually receives the care within five days of being assessed.

I find it astounding that I'm not hearing that commitment from the Premier of this province. I find it unbelievable that something so simple and so basic as giving the people that commitment, that guarantee, is somehow tough for the Liberals to do. It somehow offends their senses to be able to make a simple, basic commitment to the people of this province.

You know what? People don't expect all kinds of unachievable things when it comes to the government. What they do expect, though, is for the basic, achievable things that can be done to actually be done. Instead of making that commitment and instead of being there for the people of this province and saying to them, "Yes, we hear. We know that you're having trouble. We hear that there's a problem in the home care system, and we're not just going to make vague promises to throw money at it; we're going to guarantee you that you get the services you need," they're not doing that. The Liberals won't do that. I do not understand, for the life of me, what's so hard about making that kind of commitment.

I can tell you, wherever I go in Ontario, whether it's people like Alba, who was referenced by the member from London–Fanshawe in her speech and who was referenced by me in question period, who say that they are fearful that they will actually be pushing up the daisies before they see a home care system that meets people's needs in this province—that's a pretty sad commentary on the state of home care in Ontario.

You know, the Premier was talking today in question period about all the money they're going to throw at the home care system, but let's face it: The Liberals have been in power for 10 years. They have more than doubled the amount of money that they're throwing into the health care system, but they're throwing it at their friends. They're throwing it at the well-connected. They're throwing it at eHealth, that spent billions of

dollars and got no results. They're throwing it at an air ambulance system that allowed a well-connected Liberal to make off like a bandit in Ontario. That's what they're doing with people's precious health care dollars.

What New Democrats are saying is that we would rather see CEO salaries in hospitals capped so that they're not making seven-figure salaries and reinvest some of that money into providing home care services. We're saying that there's a lot of work that can be done to streamline administration and to standardize procurement policies across the home care sector that would actually save a lot of money and that would be directed to making sure that people get the home care they need.

So, in response to the question of the health care critic for the official opposition, that's how New Democrats would pay for a five-day guarantee for home care services.

Now, I know New Democrats around me in this caucus want to speak to this issue, so I'm going to end by saying it's not a tough thing to do. It's something that needs to be done. The people of this province deserve it. Let's get a five-day home care guarantee for the people of this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm certainly pleased to rise in the House and speak to the motion brought by our colleague from London–Fanshawe. Certainly, I appreciate her sentiments and in fact the sentiments of the New Democratic Party in regard to the need for additional home care. It's something I certainly share.

As a physician, I used to ensure that my patients received home care, whether it was on the acute hospital discharge side or whether it was on the frail elderly, more chronic side of home care. These were the days when, in fact, I used to make house calls, and I would see the progress that my patients made with the appropriate health care that was delivered at that time in the old city of Toronto.

After that, I was in fact in charge of home care, as medical officer of health for York region—this was before CCACs were created. Again, the value of home care became readily apparent to all of us in York region. It's been a well-known situation for so many years.

The balance between the acute hospital discharge side and the frail elderly side is a difficult one to achieve, but it's something that I know our government is absolutely committed to doing. Certainly, our new government does understand Ontario's aging population, which we are facing, and that our fiscal challenges require changes to how we deliver health care.

I was most encouraged by the member from Whitby–Oshawa in her remarks. She's in favour of increasing home care as well, and I certainly hope, when it comes to the budget that her leader is not even going to read, that perhaps she will actually read it and see the very positive steps, and may consider voting in favour. I think that would be most appropriate in a situation such as a minority government.

We know that the status quo is unacceptable, and that we need to transform our health care system to protect universal health care for generations. And so now, in its second year, a key goal of our Action Plan for Health Care is to make sure Ontarians get the right care in the right place at the right time. This goal is reflected through our new government's commitment to shift more services to the community, most notably to help our growing population of seniors. By moving more services into communities, the best quality care can be offered to people, close to home at a lower cost. With the number of Ontarians age 65 and older expected to double over the next 20 years, improving access to home and community care is critical to this process.

We can provide better patient care if we are responsible about it. Not increasing spending on items such as the cost of prescriptions drugs, physician compensation and hospital budgets—all very courageous decisions our budget has made through the last several years—allows us to invest in more care at home.

Now, much has been made of this week's announcement by our government that it will be investing \$260 million more in home and community care in the next year. Of this \$260 million, an estimated \$185 million will go toward home care. This increase in funding will fund home care for approximately 46,000 more seniors. Those are people in their homes who are going to receive the type of care they need, and this is an incredible benefit to all our communities. This will allow us to set a five-day wait time target for patients with complex needs; those who require home care from a nurse or a personal support worker. It will free up hospital beds, reducing pressure on emergency rooms, and it will also create jobs.

This investment by our government will help ensure that seniors receive faster, more responsive care that addresses their distinct needs. It aligns with our Seniors Strategy, which calls for increased access to home care, and is another example of how we are moving forward to implement the key recommendations of Dr. Samir Sinha's report, *Living Longer, Living Well*.

**1510**

We know that there are people, especially seniors, who need care in their homes in communities across the province. This is important as seniors frequently do not receive the support they require, either at home or in their community. It can result in unnecessary hospitalization or re-hospitalization or even admission into long-term care. My experience is that no matter the size of the community and no matter in what part of the province it's located, there is a need for people to be able to have support in their homes.

One of the most important aspects of this is that they continue to have the opportunities to socialize, to make them feel that they are part of the community, and I'm sure that this kind of social inclusion is what we all want. We want to feel like we're part of a community. With community and home care support, they can live independently and feel confident and connected to their

communities. They can live with dignity at home, close to their family, neighbours and friends. This is why community services such as Meals on Wheels, adult day programs and brain injury services all form a pivotal part of the province's health care system.

Our funding announcement this week is also significant as it acts as a cost-avoidance measure. Investing in community care means that we will spend less in other parts of the system and can see better values for our hard-earned tax dollars. This proposed investment in home and community care continues to build on our government's commitment to improving access to and funding for community care across the province.

My colleague from Ottawa—Orléans detailed the very impressive investments we've made since we were first elected in 2003. We wish to continue this type of investment by providing for home and community care, and improving our health system across Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** As Ontario's population continues to age, it's vital that we keep patients at home for as long as possible. That is where they are happiest and can remain healthiest. The challenge of putting everyone into a home just can't be done. We can't go down that road. We need to ensure that those folks have the care they want at home, and that's what they're telling us. We favour a move toward community care—people out of hospitals and in their own homes. We need to ensure there's a focus on patient-centred, integrated continuing care, and that's the biggest thing we're pushing. We in the PC caucus support these policies. In fact, they're reflected in our white papers, *Patient-Centred Health Care* and *A Healthier Ontario*.

We can no longer afford to increase health spending by 6% to 8% annually. There is not just an unlimited amount of money out there. We have to ensure that we're doing things in an effective way. What we're suggesting in our white papers is to make sure we're using every dollar effectively. We want to have more effective use of dollars, which means more people can be in the homes who actually need to be there, but more can be in their own home getting the care they need.

Generally, we support what this is, but we remain concerned about the funding method. As is many times the case with the NDP, there's lots of the flash words and the 30-second sound bites, but when you ask them for the plan of how they'll truly get to all these numbers, it's just not there. It's just not the case where there's no limit on spending.

In fact, I find it very interesting that they continually bring out these thought processes. They grabbed 15% of insurance just out of the air. There's no fact to that. There's no plan of how to get there.

**Interjection:** There's no money tree.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** There's no money tree; very correct.

I have to suggest that if this government hadn't propped up the no-limit-spending Liberals the last time

and don't continue to prop them up this time as the farm team, maybe we would have some of this change in place already and people in health care truly would be getting what they rightly deserve.

The other thing that I find a bit confusing here—again, it's very interesting; not really, when you think of the Liberals. They've reversed their previous promise to boost spending in home care by 4% annually in favour of a bigger, shinier number—\$185 million, which is \$150 million more than the NDP even asked for, at a time when they ran up a \$12-billion deficit over the last nine years. It boggles my mind. It just tells me that they're trying to buy yet another election. They did it the last time with gas plants. This time they're going to try to appease the NDP by just throwing money at them, but it's money we do not have.

The last point that I'm going to talk about is the leader of the third party, Andrea Horwath, who wrote a letter to the Premier back on February 6. In that, she talked about this plan and she suggested that they could streamline CEO salaries and also the Ontario local health integration networks and community care access centres. But as recently as the 2011 election, the leader of the third party said she would actually get rid of the LHINs. So is she getting rid of the LHINs or isn't she getting rid of the LHINs? It's all over the map.

We have to have more concrete ideas. We have to ensure at every chance that we're putting patient-centred care, the people at the very forefront. We have to have concrete plans, goals, targets and accountability built into everything. We can't just grab from the money tree and expect everything in the world to be rosy when we're facing a \$12-billion deficit.

Speaker, we're generally supportive. There needs to be lots of work on this bill before we would go the final route, and we'll always put the patients of Ontario first. Home care is one of those needs that we'll defend.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to congratulate my colleague from London–Fanshawe for bringing this motion forward. The motion is quite simple: We want a guarantee. We want a guarantee that no matter where you live in Ontario, no matter if you live in a northern or a rural community, you will have equity of access.

I represent a beautiful riding in northern Ontario. I represent 33 little communities, all of them more beautiful one than the other. So when I hear the government talk about a target, you know what I hear, Mr. Speaker? I hear that in big, urban areas, they will get their home care within one or two days, and in northern areas—in the 30 little communities of Nickel Belt—we will be at 262 days. That doesn't work for me. I want every Ontarian to be treated fairly; I want equity of access.

So when my colleague says we will bring a guarantee, this is what she means. She means that people in Nickel Belt will be treated the same way as the people in the other 106 ridings. That means that we will have the same access as everybody else.

When we hear the government talk about targets, it doesn't cut it for me. It doesn't cut it for me at all. When I hear them talking about more physician visits in the home—I mean, I get a bellyache just thinking about it. I would be happy to have physicians, period, never mind having them coming to my home.

I'm happy for the people in downtown Toronto who are able to have those services, and I don't want to take them away from them. But what we're asking, moving forward, is for a little bit of equity. I don't think this is asking for too much.

The amount of money has been clearly identified. It's not going to take services away from anyone. It's going to bring equity of access. We're not that far off. But that little difference makes a big difference for a lot of Ontarians who right now are at the receiving end of the inequity in home care.

When they talk about \$185 million more for home care and 46,000 more seniors, how could you argue about this? I haven't seen the figures or anything. But there's nothing in there that guarantees. The member for London–Fanshawe brings that guarantee, which is why we need to support what she's putting forward.

There are other members of my caucus who want to talk to this, but I will, if you allow me, Mr. Speaker, talk just for a minute about Keith and Cecile, who, on May 10, tied the knot. That was on May 10, 71 years ago. They will be celebrating their 71st anniversary—he's now 92 and she's now 90; they were 19 and 21 years old when they got married—and they will be doing that at my house.

Why am I talking about this? Because they are a prime example of how long it took for them to get home care. The hardship we went through—both of them ended up being hospitalized before we finally were able to get them the little bit of care that they needed.

Had they been living someplace else in this province, chances are they would have gotten home care faster. But they live in northern Ontario. That doesn't take their needs away. They contributed to this province beautifully over the years, and for many, many years. Now they need a little bit of help to stay in their home, and that's called home care.

So I hope that everyone in this House will realize that what we're asking, we're asking so that we have equity across this province. I think this is something that everybody here can relate to.

1520

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm pleased to make comments on this motion from the member from London–Fanshawe. Congratulations on bringing this forward as a ballot item.

I've dealt with CCACs and home care through my business for the past 15 years. Our pharmacy, which is a great pharmacy, delivers home health care products. We set up the beds, we get the orders and we ensure that the home is ready so when the person gets there, all the equipment they need is there for them to convalesce. We

also take care of the medications to ensure that they're correct, and again, that they are there for the patient when they get home.

I do agree that we should have as-equal-as-possible treatment for everybody across the whole province. I'm quite sorry to hear that Nickel Belt does, in fact, have to wait so long to get their home care. In my riding, the South West CCAC wait times are pretty much non-existent; it's pretty quick. But I think it's quite an imbalance that should be remedied, so I do support this motion.

Questions I do have, which I would like—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** We can work together.

Questions I would like to work on are—it's a guarantee that you're proposing, but I would like to know what the consequences are when the guarantee does not occur, when the government does not live up to their side of the action. We've noticed with the gas plants, the Ornge scandal and eHealth that this current government does not believe in consequences for their actions, so I put it to the third party to perhaps elaborate on what occurs when the government fails in their guarantee. There should be consequences to hold them accountable.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Well, that's it; we are getting used to it. The province is getting used to the failure in this part, and we need to hold them to a higher standard. They need to attain that standard to retain the confidence of this House. So we need to understand what the consequences are, Mr. Speaker.

The other point I'd like to bring up that no one ever seems to really talk about anymore is long-term-care homes. That's a huge issue in my riding. I have too many of my families looking for a bed because home care can't take care of them 24 hours a day in their home, but there are no beds for them. Because we have these huge areas, the LHINs find the next available bed, and many of my constituents' family members are sent out of the city, out of the community. These people have to work 9 to 5, five days a week, and maybe on the weekend. When are they going to get the time to actually go visit their mother or father or grandfather who's in another community far away?

Much of the fight in my constituency office is fighting for a spot to fill the beds. My concern is—I know we don't have a lot of money in the government anymore; the government across has wasted it for the last 10 years—that we're not preparing for the long-term-care onslaught that's going to hit us with this baby boom generation, as we get older. We are healthier; we're going to be living for a longer period of time. There are going to be many, many more people living into their 90s and 100s who aren't going to be able to be taken care of in their home, but we still need those spaces to be accessible and available for them.

I feel for the "sandwich generation," as I call them, who have their kids at home or have their kids in university and college and have the trouble of getting their

parents into a rest home or a nursing home because there's no space there. What are they to do? Stop working? Are they to worry and fret? I've had too many cases in my riding alone of that specific occurrence. What happens? They get stuck in our hospital system, taking up the beds. The expenses are going through the roof, when that money could actually either go to a home care program, could go to long-term care, but instead they're stuck in a hospital, which isn't even made to be a nursing home. They need proper care in a long-term-care home, rest home, or to be at home.

I look forward to this motion going through. I'd love for the third party to talk about the consequences when the government does fail, and I'd also like to bring up this discussion of long-term-care home beds, because I think that's an issue that has been ignored for far too long.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Kenora—Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Since I was first elected in the fall of 2011, I spent a great deal of time focusing on the health care needs in northwestern Ontario. Through speaking with people at events and private meetings and a series of health care town halls that I hosted with my party's health care critic, Madame Gélinas, last fall, it has become abundantly clear that the needs of the people in the northwest are not being met. Many of the challenges have been created because the government still refuses to recognize that a system that is designed in—and may work for—the south is inadequately designed to meet the challenges of those of us living in the north.

While there are countless challenges facing us in the northwest, one of the most pressing is timely access to home care, which is what today's motion from the member from London—Fanshawe focuses on. It's a priority for us because it is an essential piece of the health care puzzle which yields a positive return for both the patients and the health care system, and because it is one piece of the system that we can fix almost immediately through strategic investments.

Not only is keeping a person healthy and in their home longer good for the overall health of the patient, but it costs the health care system significantly less money than it would to treat a person with non-emergent symptoms in a hospital bed or long-term-care or emergency home. It is a system that, when it's functioning properly, can yield fantastic results for northerners, particularly seniors who may otherwise have to travel in order to receive the important health care services that they deserve.

People living in the north don't have access to the same convenient health care options that people do living in Toronto. Many people, in particular seniors, live in outlying areas where the nearest hospital or emergency room may be half an hour, 45 minutes or even an hour's drive away. They're being prescribed the services, but when it comes down to it, they aren't receiving home care services, and I've heard of this neglect in every single community across my riding.

It's one of the priorities that the vast majority of the people in my riding have identified as their top priority in

the pre-budget surveys that I've sent out across my riding. Waiting six months for services that are needed immediately simply is not acceptable, and fixing the problem requires only a very modest investment which is really just the redistribution of funds on the part of the province.

As my colleague from London–Fanshawe pointed out in her address, economist Don Drummond found that more than \$1 billion in potential health care savings can be found simply by doing a more effective job of managing the system. By improving access to home care, the overall costs of providing many more expensive acute care services will be reduced, resulting in cost savings for the province. These are very simple and achievable steps that can be taken to ensure that no one waits more than five days to access the home care services that they need.

We have identified them; now we're asking the province to implement them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from London–Fanshawe: You have two minutes for a reply.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. We talked about the five-day guarantee. I think the reason we talk about that is because it's so important that when people are released from the hospital, they have that home care come to them as quickly as possible so that we don't see their health fail; then they're back in that vicious circle, back into the hospital and taking up a hospital bed when they could have certainly stayed at home if they'd had that guarantee in place.

I ask myself, why are the Liberals so opposed to the guarantee? They talk about a target; why can't they commit to a five-day guarantee?

**Interjection:** Just commit.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Yes, commit. Sign on the dotted line.

Maybe this Liberal government has a problem with accountability. Committing to a five-day guarantee? That means they have to be held accountable to something that they actually commit to. We know that they've had some issues with health care and performance, or lack of performance, and the fact that there has been no accountability for eHealth and Ornge. Now, of course, we're talking about the other issues in my riding, when we look at the underdosing of chemotherapy. It's very sad that we've come to this point, where we have to ask for a guarantee for people to get home care. How ridiculous is that? But we have to do that, because this is what's happening: Seniors are at home, and they're not getting the home care that they need so that they can maintain quality of life.

As the member from Nickel Belt said, when you're married 71 years and you're able to stay home, that couple will want to stay home, and they deserve to have those home care guarantee services; they can live out their golden years in a quality of life—in a healthy way. I don't think it's asking too much to make sure that when people are released from the hospital, they can say, "I'm going to have a visit from a home care worker in five

days so I can keep my health up and not have to be back in the hospital within five days."

**1530**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We'll take the vote on this item a little later. Orders of the day.

## REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2013

### LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Dhillon moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 32, Loi concernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the co-sponsors of this bill, the member from Whitby–Oshawa and the member from Beaches–East York.

As well, I'd like to recognize some members of the Human Resources Professional Association who are here in the House today. Mr. Bill Greenhalgh, CEO—I hope I got that right—and Mr. Scott Allinson. He's the vice-president of public affairs and he's been working, I believe, with all parties with respect to this bill.

As we all know, every Ontarian is touched by work. It gives us dignity and purpose. It sustains our families and it creates wealth and growth for the province. But how happy, satisfied and safe we are in our work depends largely on how organizations implement the various laws that govern the Ontario workplace. An organization that is lax in its application of the Occupational Health and Safety Act jeopardizes the health and well-being of its workers and the bottom line of the business, while an employer that complies with the Employment Standards Act is doing its part to ensure equitable workplaces in Ontario.

As most of you are aware, HRPA regulates the HR profession in Ontario and issues the certified human resources professional designation, the national standard of excellence in human resources management. HRPA is committed to advancing the human resources profession to ensure that HR is a full partner in developing and executing organizational strategy and the creation of equitable workplaces.

The 20,000 members of HRPA work in 8,000 organizations in Ontario that employ more than 2 million Ontario workers in all industries across all sectors of the economy. They are committed to building fair and equitable workplaces for Ontario workers. HR professionals are the bridge between employee and employer to ensure both parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the province's workplace rules and regulations.

Since receiving their 1990 act, HRPAs have regulated the HR profession in Ontario by setting standards of practice to protect the public interest. In sum, its regulatory framework seeks to ensure that HR professionals are competent in their work and behave in an ethical manner. HRPAs determine for its members:

- the right to set standards for who may enter the profession;
- the right to set standards of practice for those working in the profession;
- the right to create rules for when and how members may be removed from the profession;
- the power to regulate the practice of members;
- the power to establish a professional liability insurance requirement;
- the power to establish requirements for membership and certification; and, finally,
- the powers to discipline its members.

Mr. Speaker, some have asked what this bill will do for members of the HRPAs. This bill provides HRPAs members the long-sought recognition as true professionals. As business practices, economic conditions, workforce composition and employee expectations all become more complex and interrelated, so have the demands of the professionalism of HRPAs members.

Bill 32 will enable HRPAs to ensure the quality of the HR profession in Ontario, meaning more control over our own destiny as a profession; ability to command a premium in the marketplace; increased ability to influence public policy; increased attractiveness of HR as a career choice; and controlling the use by unauthorized individuals of the CHRP designation.

This bill will provide more regulatory teeth for HRPAs to better protect the public, employers and employees. This is acknowledged when the public becomes aware of the fact that there are trained professionals in the field who follow appropriate standards.

The continuing professional development of HRPAs members provides reassurance that people will be treated fairly and legally by practitioners.

This bill will assist HRPAs and its members to evolve into a strong and credible tier-one profession. Bill 32 will update the existing act to provide checks and balances for the public and members of HRPAs. A few examples would be:

- ensuring that the Statutory Powers Procedures Act, 1990, would protect the rights of members;
- HRPAs would be required to abide by the Fair Registration Practices Code, being sections 2 and 3 of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006;
- application of the powers is subject to bylaws which must be ratified by the membership.

Another distinction would be that HRPAs's board would include three individuals who are not members of the association or a self-regulated human resources body, and who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. These board members would, in effect, represent the public interest and would, along with the board's

elected and appointed members, be charged with implementing a regulatory regime that contemplates HRPAs members' certification requirements, the complaints process, the discipline process, and professional standards.

The legislation will also add HRPAs to the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, as a schedule 1 signatory, which it voluntarily adopted two years ago as testimony to its commitment to transparent, objective, impartial and fair employment treatment and career opportunities for all Ontarians.

I would also like to note that Bill 32 has a lot to offer Ontario businesses. As business practices, economic conditions and workforce demographics, and employee expectations all become more complex, HR professionals are at the centre of this rapid change. HRPAs and its members make significant contributions to the productivity and success of the business community and organizations of all types. HRPAs members possess a high level of professionalism and provide human capital management know-how that creates huge value for the organizations that employ them.

This bill will make sure that as the world of HR is changing, so are the needs of employers to have qualified, professional HR staff to ensure that the organizations are in compliance with government regulations.

The HRPAs sought an independent expert opinion on the bill from Richard Steinecke, a legal expert in the area of professional regulation. Mr. Steinecke believes that there are numerous advantages to modernizing and upgrading the existing HRPAs act. He notes that, in general, the bill "creates a ... professional regulation statute. It addresses many of the gaps found in the current private statute. Overall the provisions are similar to that found in other statutes regulating professions. If anything, the provisions provide greater safeguards for members and give a greater say to members of the HRPAs than other similar statutes." The bill "provides numerous advantages for both members and the public. The proposed statute is consistent with similar statutes. In fact, the bill is more sensitive to the interests of members than similar statutes for most other professions."

The bill has also received strong support from the business community and allied professional groups when it was introduced in the last session, including the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Employee Relocation Council and the Certified General Accountants of Ontario, to name a few.

In supporting Bill 32, I believe it will enhance public protection by strengthening the ability of HRPAs to effectively provide the regulatory oversight that it needs to meet the standards of its members and its employers. I feel very strongly that this is a win-win for business and the protection of the public.

Thank you very much.

**1540**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It's a real pleasure both to co-sponsor and to speak to Bill 32 today. As you may be

aware, Mr. Speaker, the Human Resources Professionals Association, or HRP, has almost 20,000 members in Ontario. I'm proud to say that nearly 1,000 members are from my riding and the surrounding area. Many of them have expressed their support of this bill to me.

I would like to welcome several of the representatives from HRP who have joined us today in the gallery for this debate. Mr. Bill Greenhalgh and Mr. Scott Allinson, welcome to Queen's Park. It's great to see you both.

A regulated human resources profession is in the interest of employees and also has much to offer Ontario's businesses as well as the public. Human resources professionals are often seen as champions of change as organizations seek to increase their operational effectiveness. The public can place greater confidence in accredited professionals such as those human resources practitioners who hold a certified human resources professional, or CHRP, designation.

The upgraded regulatory powers resulting from Bill 32 would enable HRP to better protect the public interest from incompetent or unethical human resources practitioners, help prevent abusive corporate positions and, if abuse should occur, provide the public with an effective means by which to seek recourse. Quite simply, Bill 32 is good for the public and good for employers in Ontario.

HRP members make huge contributions to the success and productivity of the business community and organizations of all types. One specific area where I personally believe that human resources professionals can be of great assistance is with respect to the employment of people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities are currently receiving Ontario disability support payments, not because they want to but because they are simply unable to find employment. Many employers, on the other hand, are reluctant to hire people with disabilities due in large part to a lack of knowledge and associated stigma, particularly in the area of mental health.

This is also an economic challenge. Within the next five to 10 years, Ontario will face a significant shortage of skilled workers, so we need to be able to employ as many people as possible in our labour market and utilize the skills and talents of many people who are currently underutilized—people with disabilities, older workers, aboriginal workers and women, in many cases. Human resources professionals are key to this transformation of our workplace.

Some have said that this bill will be a burden to employers. I would say that that is simply false. Membership in both the HRP and the CHRP designation is voluntary. Employers always have the choice whether to hire CHRPs for their firms or businesses.

In closing, I would like to say that in the 20 years HRP has been in existence, the CHRP has been very successful in demonstrating its value. If anything, Bill 32 will increase the value of the CHRP designation. Between HRP members' commitment to professional excellence, their unique role as a bridge between employers and employees, and their key role in optimizing employ-

ment for businesses, as the member from Brampton West said, I believe Bill 32 is a win-win for everyone, and I would urge all members to support Bill 32.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's a distinct pleasure and honour to stand and speak in favour of this bill, Bill 32. It's one that I'm actually quite close to as probably the only human resources professional that sits in this chamber, next to, maybe, John O'Toole, who had a past life in HR.

**Interjection:** Don't forget me.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Okay; now everybody is.

Certainly I think this is long overdue. This is something that human resources professionals have been looking for for some time. I think it's prudent to recognize how much the profession and this job have changed over the years, coming from a time where—at one time it simply was just payroll, the personnel department that hired people, made sure they were on the payroll and all the administrative stuff was taken care of.

It has transformed itself, over the past 10 or 20 years, to a profession that's responsible for the health and safety of the workers in the workplace, labour relations, benefits management. They're privacy custodians—the guardians of all the private information about the employees that work at any given employer—recruitment and payroll management, just to name a few things.

You can see that many of these actual elements of an HR professional's job, if they're not done properly and if they're not done with attention to detail and attention to the law, can actually jeopardize a business very dramatically, to the point where it could actually put them out of business if they're not doing their job properly.

It's critically important, I think, to have a standard in place for human resources professionals to be able to be accredited and be held accountable within their own profession so that they don't do damage to the businesses that they have, and to give businesses the confidence that when they hire someone with a CHRP designation—or a member of HRP, of which I am a member—they know they're getting good-quality people who have done quality training and have been designated and tested to a very tight standard and are going to be held accountable, not only by their employer and by the people that they work with in their own workplace, but by their own association as well and by their peers. This is a really powerful tool that can be used in any profession. I think it's high time that the profession is recognized as being a critical piece of the structure of any business.

This bill, Bill 32, really enhances public protection in general and makes sure that we have ongoing progressive labour relations and that the health and safety of the workplace is at the highest possible standard we can have, not just in the country but in the world. Ontario is already working towards that. I think this bill really speaks to that.

The member who introduced it certainly covered a lot of the points, I think, that are very, very pertinent to this, and I think I look forward to seeing this through. I really

do hope that this sees the light of day; often, private members' bills don't. This one makes sense. It has been introduced a number of times before and I think it's high time that we actually see this bill through. It should be just a housekeeping issue, and I really do expect that this is something that could actually benefit businesses, the well-being of our employees, health and safety, and standards of employment in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I am very happy to speak to this bill, just briefly. This is the second time that this bill has been introduced. It was introduced a couple of years ago. I brought it forward then as a private member's bill. It has now been brought forward by my colleagues here because I couldn't bring it forward as a cabinet minister, but I did want to speak to it. I think the importance of the bill—and I don't want to get into the details, but just let me say what I think is the overall importance of this bill. Ontario has got real challenges in keeping its high-quality industry here in Ontario, and indeed, all other industry and corporations.

We are also trying very, very hard to attract industry and corporations and businesses from other jurisdictions. One of the things that industry looks for when it considers moving into Ontario is a very, very stable environment in the sense of management and employees, whether they're unionized or not; whether they have a world in which they can work in a very professional way and exchange and debate their needs, whether it's from the union's point of view in communicating to management, whether it's non-unionized employees communicating to management, or management's need to communicate to the unions and to its employees.

One of the things that has made Ontario so attractive is the quality of our human resource professionals here in Ontario. I've travelled out of the province. I've travelled out of the country. I've been on trade missions. One of the things that I've heard is that Ontario has such a stable work environment and that the relationship between management and employees—unionized employees and non-unionized employees—is a model that all other jurisdictions try to emulate.

1550

I think that one of the many reasons we have that context in which we operate here in Ontario is the work of the human resources professionals, as individuals in the companies they work for and in other places where they work, and also as an institution, the Human Resources Professionals Association. They have brought professionalism and competence and a level of confidence in the process that is just outstanding.

We want to build on that. We want to build on that environment, we want to further enhance the environment and we want to recognize the work of human resources professionals and the work they do to create this environment in which companies and employers want to do business and want to have a relationship between employers and employees.

I think the beauty of this bill is that it recognizes the work that human resources professionals have done, and raises the profession to another level of respect in the community and in the province. That's good for Ontario. That's going to help us attract jobs and more jobs.

I want to thank the executive at the HRP: Scott Allinson, who is here—stand up for a second, Scott—and his CEO, Bill Greenhalgh. Bill is here. They have worked tirelessly on this over the years, and I thank them. This is a good piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association. As with most other bills we have been debating in the House this year, you can trace this bill back to an early form as 2011's Bill 28. But while the name of the bill is essentially the same, the nuts and bolts have changed somewhat.

One of the changes between the existing act and the proposed act being debated today is that the former is a private act, whereas Bill 32 is being introduced as a public act, which gives it a level of status not offered by the private act.

Among its provisions, the new act offers a framework for membership in the HRP, and prohibits the use of specific designations and initials by unauthorized individuals and entities. It outlines protocols for complaint resolutions against members, sets up a disciplinary practice, authorizes inspection, and provides for the appointment of inspectors and investigators. Bill 32 enhances public protection by ensuring that accredited professionals are trained to follow appropriate standards and offer public protection from unprofessional conduct. Bill 32 would apply only to members of the HRP, not all human resource professionals.

These are important steps, and this bill addresses many of the gaps in the current private statute. The fact that this would be a public act signals to all in the province that the government of Ontario understands the importance of the human resources professional to our society. It is essential and often thankless work, so we owe it to them to take this seriously. It's not often that we're reminded of the key role these professionals play in companies, but it is important that we as legislators focus our efforts on making sure they are treated with the appropriate levels of respect, and also be aware that their work impacts the public in profound ways. We must be mindful of that.

That said, this legislation is not perfect. There are some details that need work, which both the Human Resources Professionals Association and some of my colleagues have flagged. I'm hopeful that these details can be ironed out at committee, and that the legislation can be made more substantial, so that all of us can feel good about speaking to its merits at third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It is again my privilege and honour to stand and speak to this bill, as I have on past

occasions. I want, first of all, to applaud the people who keep coming back here with the patience of Job. You come back here with a bill, you see it debated and you see the Legislature prorogued for elections. You come back again, you debate a bill, you see the Legislature prorogued for four months and your bill dies. You come back again, you present your bill, and you see it being debated once more.

To Bill Greenhalgh and Scott Allinson, I have nothing but the highest respect for how you have kept your sense of humour through all of this. Never once have I seen you get angry or wonder about the wisdom of this place that takes so long to do something that I think all members in this House will agree with. I will be very surprised if there's anyone who votes against this today. I think everyone will vote for it just to send it to committee and to ensure that the bill eventually gets enacted.

I want to say that this is a bill whose time has long since come. The people in the HRPAs who put this forward understood this when they brought the bill forward a couple of years ago. They understood that the original bill, setting up the designation and allowing them to work as human resources professionals was 20 years old; it was outdated. A lot of things have changed in that time, and we need to change with it, as does their organization.

Labour in Ontario has undergone a profound change in the last 20 years; probably more profound change than in all of Ontario's history since Confederation. In the last 20 years, what have we witnessed here in terms of people working and job expectations? We've seen technology that has replaced whole levels of governance inside most industries and most commercial ventures. We've seen people coming here with foreign credentials who want to use them and have to be evaluated, and we need professionals to look after that.

We've seen a preponderance of part-time work, which was unheard of even a generation ago and is now the new norm, where people are working reduced hours for reduced amounts of pay, and how that has to work through government legislation and contracts to figure out where they fit into the system and how much they're entitled to. We've seen guest workers coming—there are now 300,000 guest workers in Canada, many of them here in Ontario—who are here from other lands for a very finite period of time, and who are expected to work, sometimes train Canadians and then leave. We have the whole incidence of pay equity, which although it began more than 20 years ago, still grinds on and on and on.

People from the HRPAs need to understand that we have unionization. And although there was unionization before, unionization today is different. It's not confined to an individual factory or workplace. It is now unionization of people across industries. I'm thinking here about hotel workers and others who unionize under one union but work in multiple locations with multiple contracts and working conditions.

We have the whole issue of people working with disabilities. Although people who had disabilities were in the workforce before, there is more understanding today

among more enlightened employers about how they have to accommodate people with disabilities. Certainly they look to the HRPAs to help accomplish that.

Last, but not least—there are probably more that I'm forgetting—is the whole legislation around workplace harassment, which, although it has existed since people first started going to work, is now looked upon in a very different light. We require professionals to determine what harassment is, and we require professionals to make sure it is stamped out in each and every place where people go to do their work.

It was my honour, a few months ago, to present a group of people with Queen's Jubilee Medals. I presented all of my medals to people who live in Beaches–East York except one, who was not able to attend on the night—it was here in this august place, the Legislature. People came here, and I presented their medals. One could not come. I was asked to come and present it, and I didn't know at the time we were giving him the medal that he was a member of the HRPAs. I didn't know that.

He asked, through my office, if we could present the medal to him at the annual association meeting. He wanted to receive the medal in front of his peers. You can imagine that I was delighted to do that. He got the medal for his work on organ donations and organ transplants and his work with the Canadian Liver Foundation—tremendous work.

**1600**

I wasn't aware he was an HRPAs member, but when I found out, I was delighted to go there. I went there to present the medal to what I thought would be a couple dozen people at their annual meeting and went down to the hall to present it. I have to tell you I was taken aback. There were thousands and thousands of people in that room. I had no idea of the size of it, I had no idea how they had drawn people from all over North America to attend it, that in fact Ontario has the second-largest HRPAs convention in all of North America—it takes place yearly—or that they were there to do many things, to learn many things.

After I presented the medal, I talked to the people in HRPAs, the people in the room, those who were from Ontario, about this organization and what they were trying to do. To a person, they were supportive. There was nobody who was opposed. There was no one who thought this was the wrong way to go. There was nobody who had any constructive criticism, even. They were united in the fact that they believe that the designation that they were going to get, the CRHP—and the organization was going to do everything necessary to highlight the kind of work they did and to give it strength. Those thousands of people, if not the two gentlemen here today, convinced me overwhelmingly of the necessity of passing this bill.

The bill needs to be passed. What are going to be the benefits of the bill? The bill needs to be passed because we have done the same thing for other groups. We have done the same thing for engineers. We have done or are attempting to do the same thing for denturists, for people

in the medical health profession. We have done the same thing in part for lawyers, although they have their own body, the Law Society of Upper Canada. We have done it for every professional group that seeks to have a designation and a bill like this.

There's a reason they all want the bill; there's a reason, and that is because it will give them the authority and the moral suasion out there in the public so that people will know that they are professionals and they can self-regulate. We look to these self-regulated professionals in many cases as a sign that you know when you go there you are going to get honest and good treatment.

If people don't belong to the self-regulated body, you have to question and ask yourself, "Why don't they belong to that body? Do they not have the credentials? Do they not pay? Is there something wrong? Are there cases against them?" All kinds of questions would come to your mind.

I want to tell you that one of the things I have read about and I admire about HRP A is that in the last couple of years, complaints on HR professionals have come in to the Ministry of Labour, but not one of the complaints that has come in has been of an HRP A member. They are complaints about people who are not members, who have not met the standard. They have no complaints against their membership because they are (a) able to train them better, and (b) able to police them and advise them when they are taking the wrong steps—and those members have someone to ask professional questions of.

They need to have one professional body, and this will grant it. They need the ability to advise and enforce a code of conduct, so that if anybody steps outside of those bounds, they can be disciplined or removed and their status as an HRP A member can be taken away. They need that in order to make sure that people have confidence in those they are hiring and putting in those jobs.

They need the ability to discipline those errant members, to take away their livelihood in some cases if they are not acting appropriately. They need to be transparent and fair to their members, but more importantly to the public at large. That's why I was pleased to see in this bill that there will be three additional members put on the board who are not HRP A members, who are there to protect the general public and to make sure that the public's interest is at all times maintained.

They need the designation of CHRP. They need to be able to put those initials after their names. Just as many professions are able to put the initials after their names only when they belong to the accredited association, this needs to happen as well. It's all right for someone to say, "I'm an HR person. Never went to school, never took any courses, never did all the things that most HR professionals have done, but I'm going to call myself an HR person anyway." Well, there's nothing in here that's going to stop them from doing that, but I will tell you, any company that wants to hire an HR person should make sure that they have the initials CHRP behind their names.

I welcome this group, and again, I started out by saying I applaud your patience. I ask you for your

patience again. Because this bill, as all bills, is here for second reading, I am relatively confident we're going to do the right thing today. Then we're going to send it to committee. My good friend from Mississauga will stand up at the appropriate time once it has received the support of this House and send it to a committee.

Once it gets to committee, of course, it's up to the government House leader to negotiate to actually have the bill brought forward. It will not have the same weight as a government bill, so please choose the committee wisely. Then, after it's finished in committee, the day or two of hearings—and I'm sure that's all it will need—it will come back to this House, if the government agrees, for third reading. It will then have to be sent to the Lieutenant Governor to be signed into law and finally proclaimed.

That is a long process. It need not be that long. We are in this maelstrom right now of leading up to a potential election. I am asking the government members especially: Give some swift passage to this bill. Make sure it passes. Make sure it doesn't die with another prorogation for election. These people have waited long enough, and they deserve their own independent and good association.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 32. Let me first thank the members of the three parties that have brought this forward in a co-sponsored fashion. I think it's the sort of conduct that people in Ontario expect from a minority government, and I think they like it when they see us trying to work together.

I don't think I'd be telling anyone something they don't know if I explained that Ontario businesses that compete in the global economy today are in the midst of a great change. Business practices, economic conditions, demographics, labour law—everything is becoming more complex and more interrelated, and the profession we rely on in the business world and from a government perspective to deal with that rapid change and to offer us the best advice they can are those men and women in Ontario who are engaged in the human resources business.

Many of the professionals that are engaged in that have chosen to belong to the HRP A. I understand that province-wide, they have about 20,000 people that have signed up on a voluntary basis, and I was a little surprised to find out that about 8% of all the human resource professionals in Ontario actually live in my own riding, in Oakville. That was interesting to hear because I didn't know that before I got some more information on this organization.

I think any association, any profession that achieves the ability to self-regulate, when it receives that level of confidence from its government, proves to the people involved in that government that it has reached a stage of maturity and that it's able to conduct itself in a way that's in the best interests of the society they live in, the people they represent and the employers they work for, and they each play an interrelated role in that.

The rules that the HRP is seeking, I think, are the ability to regulate in the area of competence; in the area of the legal requirements they need to bring to the job; dignity in the workplace, for example; balancing various interests between employer and employee when it comes to labour law and when it comes to workplace health and safety perhaps; and confidentiality in the workplace. Privacy plays a very important role and has a much higher profile as an issue than it had in the past, whether individuals from time to time may find themselves in a position where they should be declaring a conflict of interest, where something they're asked to do as a professional is in direct competition with their own personal interest. Also, I think when these types of organizations receive the respect that they are accorded, they are also able to foster that professional growth amongst their own members.

I think that over the past year, or certainly since I've been associated with this issue, the HRP has proven over and over again that it meets all those criteria; that it's got the ability, it's got the competence, to be able to move ahead with its own members. It's asking us today to allow them to move forward. It's asking us today to transfer to them the powers that they've been seeking for some time. I think the transfer of those powers is in the best interests of the province of Ontario; certainly it's in the best interests of the business community. It's obviously in the best interests of the HRP itself as an organization, and in the people that it represents.

#### 1610

The way that they bring value to the business world, Speaker, is they're able to identify trends in the workplace, to forecast changes that are coming in the workplace that allow us to have a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions where human resources professionals may not be as adept as the ones we find here in the province of Ontario.

So I think they're able to provide information to businesses in the province of Ontario that allow those businesses to make smart decisions, allow us to keep a little bit ahead of the curve and allow us to keep the Ontario economy a little bit ahead of the curve.

We've given these types of powers to the Law Society of Upper Canada, to the doctors' college, to the teachers' college, to the College of Trades, accountants—so I think it's about time that we also transfer these powers to the human resources professionals in the province of Ontario.

I'll be supporting this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to rise and speak today to Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association. Now this bill doesn't reinvent the wheel on this issue, so to speak, but in this instance it is a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

This bill would effectively update the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act of 1990, which is, in fact, a private act. While this may sound like

a very minor change to those at home, it's actually a very significant step.

The private act was a good start, and it has served its purpose well, but the reality is that over 20 years have passed since this act came into effect. Times have changed and legislation must change with them. This updated bill is one that is needed and is relatively straightforward. As a public act, it demonstrates the will of the Legislature and sends a signal to the human resources professionals across the province that they are being taken seriously.

The HRP describes its role as regulator of the industry, stating, "Through the establishment of standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP; the assessment of the qualifications of individuals against established standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP, and the official recognition that an individual has met established standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP."

Now, given the importance of HR professionals, it is absolutely critical that they receive certification and oversight. They have a great responsibility to both employers and employees, and hold confidential information right in their hands. From personal financial information to individuals experiencing substance addiction or complicated workplace disputes, human resources professionals are stewards of some of the most complex and personal aspects of any company.

But HR professionals do much more than oversee personal information. They're often regarded as drivers of change in business, as the most successful companies look to innovators in the field of human resources to boost worker productivity and job satisfaction—as a matter of fact, just as I did as an HR professional working in the private sector with a company of over 5,000 employees, both union and non-union.

There would be many gaps in the existing bill that would be plugged if this legislation is in fact enacted. Given the importance of the job, we must ensure proper oversight is there. As a public act, the bill signals that the government recognizes the importance of the profession to society as a whole and in fact, offering the status and recognition not given to a private act. The bill strengthens the ability of the HRP to hold members to certain professional standards to meet the demands of its members and businesses right here in Ontario. We need to reward professionals that are doing quality work across the province by ensuring that their peers adhere to certain codes of ethics which will keep the designation respected.

I want to clarify some of the concerns that human resource professionals across the province may have. Some have mentioned that by entrenching the HRP, it will provide additional costs to employees. To that, I would remind those concerned that membership in the Human Resources Professionals Association is entirely voluntary.

Since 1990, the association has regulated the industry by granting the Certified Human Resources Professional,

the CHRP—or, as I call it, the “chirp”—designation. Just like professional designations in other industries, CHRP allows those with the distinction to command higher salaries and gives them a good return on their modest investment.

I applaud the Human Resources Professionals Association, as well as the members from Whitby–Oshawa, Brampton West, and Beaches–East York for their collaborative approach to this bill. I'll look forward to the swift passage of this bill so that it will be enacted without delay.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It is a pleasure to stand up on this private member's bill introduced not merely by my colleague but by my friend, the member from Brampton West, who has in the past introduced some groundbreaking legislation to deal with the regulation of temp agencies. He's the latest member to come forward with this bill, which deals with a series of measures to enable human resources professionals to regulate the affairs of their own profession.

There is a teachable body of knowledge required to become a human resources professional. When we think of the things that we ask human resources professionals to do in our companies, whether it be looking after the collective agreement in a unionized environment or dealing with people's training plans or resolving delicate personal issues, we're conferring on our HR people a fairly large measure of responsibility and, in many cases, authority.

What I think this bill does is, it proposes a regulatory framework which would be pretty much what you would expect to find if you were to go to work as a professional engineer or as a chartered accountant or as a CGA or as a medical professional or a dentist. That's what this bill really focuses on. I think this is at least the third time that I can recall debating this particular bill. I think at this point, it's about time to make our decision again, to move it to committee. In committee, if there's fine tuning needed, that's when we can come forward and talk about what other measures may be necessary, give anybody that maybe would like to have input their chance to talk about the bill, and bring it back here to the House to see whether there's any fine tuning finished at third reading. Perhaps this time when the bill has been introduced, let's pass it, enact it and grant to the human resources profession those same rights, privileges and responsibilities that we grant to every other type of profession in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

The member for Brampton West, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** First of all, I'd like to thank the members from Beaches–East York, Whitby–Oshawa, Barrie, Willowdale, Burlington, Oakville, Mississauga–Streetsville, Chatham–Kent–Essex, and, in particular, I want to give an extra bit of thanks to the member from

Willowdale, who I know has introduced this bill a couple of times in the past. I know that there have been hiccups along the way.

I also want to thank the folks from HRP who are here with us today: Mr. Bill Greenhalgh, CEO; and Scott Allinson, who's the VP of public affairs.

Speaker, we're blessed in Ontario to have one of the greatest climates for someone to come here to work. That's because we have certain laws and regulations that make Ontario a big magnet for people—highly skilled professionals, who have options other than Ontario—to come here to Ontario.

That's because we have the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Employment Standards Act. These acts, from time to time, change, either through legislation or regulation, so it's important that we fill in the gaps that are missing in the human resources act, which is what this bill intends to do, and give human resources professionals the level of status that doctors, lawyers and accountants have. Human resources is a very complicated subject, so we want to make sure that the people who practice in the human resource area are educated and have the proper training to effectively enforce the rules and regulations of Ontario.

I look forward to dealing with this bill in committee. To sum it up, this bill is good for the economy, it's good for employees and it's good for business.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

POOLED REGISTERED  
PENSION PLANS ACT, 2013  
LOI DE 2013 SUR LES RÉGIMES  
DE PENSION AGRÉÉES COLLECTIFS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 19, standing in the name of Mrs. Munro.

Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 50. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a bunch of noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll take the vote at the end of regular business.

HOME CARE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Armstrong has moved private member's notice of motion number 19. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion is carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES  
PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS  
EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Dhillon has moved second reading of Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion carries.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Brampton West?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I'd like to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Agreed? Agreed.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1623 to 1628.*

POOLED REGISTERED  
PENSION PLANS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES RÉGIMES  
DE PENSION AGRÉÉS COLLECTIFS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 50. All those in favour please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

Albanese, Laura	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Jackson, Rod	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Jaczek, Helena	O'Toole, John
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Cansfield, Donna H.	Klees, Frank	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Coteau, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Thompson, Lisa M.
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Delaney, Bob	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	McKenna, Jane	Wong, Soo
Dunlop, Garfield	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Elliott, Christine	McNeely, Phil	Yurek, Jeff
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	
Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Schein, Jonah
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John
Forster, Cindy	Prue, Michael	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 17.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Munro.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The Legislative Assembly committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested it be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee. Agreed? Agreed.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

NON-PROFIT HOUSING  
CO-OPERATIVES STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT  
SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2013, on the motion for second reading of Bill 14, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts/ Projet de loi 14, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** As I stated in my remarks last week on the Local Food Act, here we go again. Just as Yogi Berra said, it's déjà vu all over again. The McGuinty-Wynne government has brought forward yet another bill that we have already debated. Bill 14, the non-profit housing co-operatives act, is before—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I understand that this bill has been in the works since 2007. That's six years. I'm hopeful that the Liberals are finally going to be able to deliver on their pledge now that it is 2013.

The previous Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, now the Premier, introduced this last year. However, it fell victim to Dalton McGuinty's prorogation. It should already be law, but it is not. We are looking forward to having this bill go to committee to see how it could be made better, to find ways to improve it. There are many people in Perth-Wellington, and indeed all across Ontario, who are waiting for affordable housing.

Co-operative housing fulfills an important need in our province. Co-operatives are a very important part—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can I ask members to take your discussions outside?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Co-operatives are a very important part of our housing supply in Ontario. Bill 14 has the general support of all three caucuses and it is time that we moved forward.

About a year ago, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from housing co-ops in my riding. I spoke with Doris Johnson, who is a board member on the Bard of Avon Housing Co-operative. Mike Voogt, manager of Festival City Co-operative Homes, was also at the meeting. So was Harvey Cooper, manager of government relations for the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada in their Ontario regional office. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with them to discuss important issues for people in Perth–Wellington who live in co-operative housing.

There are five co-ops in Perth–Wellington, supplying 196 units. There are also housing co-operatives in Harriston and Palmerston which are owned by the county of Wellington. The Ontario PC caucus knows that co-ops have an important role in our housing mix in Ontario. They provide good affordable housing options for my constituents.

We agree that the Landlord and Tenant Board dispute resolution process needs to be streamlined. The current system costs co-op members a million dollars in unnecessary legal costs every year. But the costs do not end there. The broken dispute resolution system also clogs up our courts. This costs all Ontarians time and money.

Again, Bill 65, which was supported by all three parties but died on the order paper when the member for Ottawa South prorogued this House, did a lot to fix the system. Bill 65 started to tackle the backlog. However, in the new housing co-op bill, Bill 14, we found a surprise. It was something that the Co-operative Housing Federation never mentioned as an issue in the previous legislation. Bill 14 proposes to give the Landlord and Tenant Board the power to waive the \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants.

As my colleague the member from Leeds–Grenville, our very capable municipal affairs and housing critic, has said, there seems to be no rhyme or reason for this change. It seems to be a matter of playing politics. Many feel that waiving the filing fee and introducing a new process will lead to increased complaints to the Landlord and Tenant Board. However, we already have a backlog. This just doesn't make sense, Speaker. The system is going to suffer from further delays and the process will be even more bogged down. Some worry that there may be more nuisance applications from both sides being put forward.

We need a system that works. I understand that \$45 is a significant cost for some applicants, and I'm sympathetic to that. I understand that this money can be used for food, for clothing and for hydro bills—hydro bills which are spiraling out of control under this government's watch. However, the effect that waiving that fee has is that there would be increased applications to the

Ontario Landlord and Tenant Board. This will only cause further delays, and this causes further costs for those involved.

My understanding is that typically the \$45 filing fee is returned to the tenant if they are successful at the Landlord and Tenant Board, so why is the minister making this change? Why is she suddenly waiving the fee? Again, it's all about politics.

I'd like to take a moment to reflect on what it meant when Bill 65 died on the order paper, along with every other piece of legislation that was before this House—over 100 pieces of legislation, I might add. In the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada's newsletter in the fall of 2012, here's what it said:

“After very promising progress and building excitement, Bill 65 died on the order paper, along with all other legislation, when the Premier resigned and prorogued the Legislature. The bill would have brought in the long-awaited changes to the eviction system for Ontario housing co-ops.”

The CHF newsletter went on to say, “When the Premier made his announcement on October 15, the bill was in the middle of second reading debate, which was expected to wrap up later that week. This would have marked an important milestone and brought the legislation close to final approval.

“This is incredibly disappointing news for us, especially when the government had given our legislation priority and it was moving forward,” says Harvey Cooper, manager of government relations for CHF Canada's Ontario region. “The only good news in this is that the minister and opposition housing critics still support the legislation as good public policy and have vowed to do their best to bring it back whenever the Legislature reconvenes,” said Cooper.”

Clearly, the Co-operative Housing Federation was disappointed when this Legislature prorogued, just as we in the Ontario PC caucus were.

When there was support for Bill 65, why then has the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing now introduced an amended bill and this out-of-the-blue surprise amendment? I support the concept that there should be a more expedited way of resolving disputes. We all know that when matters go through the courts, it often takes years before issues are resolved. When you are dealing with evictions or other issues that co-operative housing organizations have to deal with, they need to be dealt with in a more timely fashion.

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As I mentioned earlier, there's also the issue of cost. It takes a lot of money to go to court. For residents in Stratford who live in Banbury Cross, the Bard of Avon and the Festival City Co-operative, we need a bill that addresses their concerns. For Little Falls Co-operative Homes and Stonetown Co-operative Homes in St. Marys—they are also expecting that their concerns are addressed.

In conclusion, we generally support this new bill. However, there are some amendments that we would like

to see in committee. We need to deal with this issue and get it to committee as soon as possible, and we need to have discussion in committee and move it forward quickly.

This is a bill, like I said before, that has support of all three parties. Unfortunately, when the Legislature was prorogued last fall, we lost a lot of time. This bill should have been through, it should have been done, and here we are debating it again.

I hope that things can go quickly with this bill as we do support it, and we need to get it to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm going to speak for about 10 seconds because I want to see this bill go to committee. It's been talked to death in here. Our good friends have come back enough times over the years. Let's just get moving on this. I would advise and hope that my colleagues across the aisle do the same, and actually even to the right of me, figuratively and literally. We hope that they only speak for 10 seconds, too.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Let's get on with helping people in co-operative housing. Let's get on with the work—

**Interjection:** Stop the filibuster—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** —and stop the filibuster, Tories. Let's get on with the work of the people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I do respect the comments from my colleague.

With respect to this bill, I think what we're looking for is some respect for process here in terms of my right—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. Let's put things in context here. I think it's important. This has been here three times. If the government had a real desire to bring a conclusion to this thing, they could invoke a closure motion which would force this thing to the end of debate and then to committee.

I put to you that it's more politics—with all due respect, it's more of the politics in terms of the tools that we see in question period, dealing with committees that are charged with resolving the gas plant issue. It is tied to this bill. This bill is now hung up in a situation where I believe we would be supportive of this bill in the longer term.

What we're asking the government to do is really to come forward with some of the information on two of the things, including the gas plants, including the Ornge helicopter issues and—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member to keep his comments to the previous speaker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** That's why—the members are saying things that aren't helpful in terms of helping our visitors here understand how they've been caught in the vice of the sheer politics of it all.

This has been here three times. Why is it still here? You're the government, and you're a minority government now after the recent election. All I'm saying—I'm trying to put some clarity, Mr. Speaker, to this. I will be speaking on it, as other members in our caucus want to express their concerns and also recognize—I want to put on the record here the members who are here. I have just met Diane Miles; Judy Shaw; Dale Reagan, who's been here for all of the debate; and Harvey Cooper. I respect the fact that they are caught in this vortex that I say is the politics of this place on this issue. The government runs the business; they have the tools to make it change.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Very briefly on the member from Perth–Wellington: He said things three things that I'd like to repeat because they're absolutely what we should be doing. He said, "Here we go again," "Let's get on with it," and "Let's send this to committee." I agree wholeheartedly with him. Let's do all of those three things right now.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Perth–Wellington, you've got two minutes.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I agree, and I thank all those who spoke to my comments, even though some were very short, and that's understandable.

This bill should have been passed. It should have been done. However, the government side chose to take four months out of the year and have a leadership convention. So don't sit over there and blame us for this, because it's not our fault.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** You guys shut this Legislature down. That's what happened. Over 100 pieces of legislation died when you did that, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I won't say much more than what I said before. We need to get this done. Let's get it to committee and let's get this bill passed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Even after being here in this assembly for more than 22 years, I still consider it an immense privilege to rise in this House and offer my remarks in response to the provincial government's proposed legislation.

All of us in this House have been entrusted by our constituents to represent them in this place, to give voice to their values and beliefs and to bring forward their hopes and aspirations as well as worries and concern. In opposition, it is our role to point out the flaws and drawbacks of the government's proposals, because you can be sure of one thing: The government will not talk about the downside of what it's doing, nor will they speak for the people whose interests are being negatively affected.

I want to talk about co-op housing and Bill 14, but I need to place this debate in context. It's clear to me that some on the government side don't understand the role of the opposition in our parliamentary democracy. The

Liberal government plans to introduce its budget on May 2, we are told. In recent years, provincial budgets have been presented in this House in late March, roughly coinciding with the end of the fiscal year and the beginning of new one on the 1st of April. This year's budget is more than a month late when compared to recent years. Given the fact that the government leaked to the media that their budget would be sometime in April, they're coming in late according to their own timetable.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, has said that it's unlikely that he will support the budget unless the government does a 180-degree reversal of its tax-and-spend approach, its policy of doubling the debt over a period of 10 years or so, and its excessive red tape and regulations. In response, the government criticizes us, suggesting we've made up our minds before even reading the budget. They say we should consider voting for their budget.

But I want to ask them this: When in Ontario's history has any leader of the official opposition voted in favour of a government's budget motion? I certainly can't recall it happening here in the last 22 years—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Perhaps the member from St. Catharines recalls it, but I'm not sure. He'd have to tell us.

I don't recall Bob Nixon, Murray Elston, Jim Bradley, Lyn McLeod or Dalton McGuinty —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I hope the member is going to tie this all into the bill that's in front of us.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** —the Liberal opposition leaders with whom I've served, ever voting for a government's budget.

Why is this? The answer is simple: Opposition parties oppose. They don't normally prop up the government. You can't expect an opposition party to compromise its principles just because the government lacks a majority and would like to hang onto power a little longer. We await the budget speech on May 2 and debate on the budget motion that follows and the vote that will determine whether or not the government survives or has to resign because it lacks the confidence of the House.

We are here today debating Bill 14. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in her remarks on this bill, explained that co-op housing is something like 40 years old in Ontario. She said that there are something like 550 non-profit housing co-ops providing affordable housing for 44,000 households. They estimate that 125,000 Ontarians call a co-op unit their home. Think of the population of Guelph, Cambridge or Barrie, and round it off a bit. That's the number of people who live in co-op housing. The minister described four characteristics that define co-op housing. They are, she said, affordability, governance, security of tenure and community.

Bill 14 is a proposal to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act to move most co-op tenure dispute cases from the court system to the Landlord and Tenant Board. These

disputes might include rent arrears, late payment of rent, wilful damage, illegal activity, or interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of their property. The cost of hearing and resolving these disputes in the courts is currently estimated to be as much as \$5,000 each. The hope of this bill is that the Landlord and Tenant Board will be able to hear these disputes and resolve them more fairly, quickly and at a lower cost for all concerned.

However, has the government really thought this through? Can the Landlord and Tenant Board handle these additional cases? We hear that this important adjudicative body is already backlogged. Does this mean that the settling of all landlord and tenant disputes will be further delayed? If the government says not, are they planning on increasing the resources, both human and financial, for the Landlord and Tenant Board? Where is the money coming from for that?

**1650**

Here's what our Ontario PC caucus is saying. We supported this bill when it was introduced last year. However, the bill died on the order paper when the House was prorogued on October 15. If they hadn't shut down the House, in all likelihood, this bill would be law by now. As such, this delay has likely cost co-op members hundreds of thousands of dollars in court costs, as the old rules have remained in place during the interval. This is where the Liberal government has put its own interests ahead of the interests of tenants in co-op housing.

We're concerned that this bill contains an unnecessary amendment that may open the floodgates to nuisance applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board, swamping a system that's already backlogged, further hampering the board's ability to hear cases in a timely manner. So, we ask, is this bill going to solve one problem and, in the process, make another problem worse? That is the key question here, and it's the one that the government hasn't answered, but must.

Our Ontario PC critic for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for Leeds–Grenville, does a super job in this House, and he is a superb representative of his constituents. He gave our party's leadoff speech in response to this bill on March 4. That day being a Monday, I was in the chair all afternoon, and I recall his speech as being outstanding. The member for Leeds–Grenville spoke for an hour, giving a comprehensive and thoughtful critique of the government's housing policies. He pulled no punches, but he was also constructive, as a good critic should always be.

He noted that a bill such as Bill 14 has been talked about since 2007. It's something the government has promised for the past six years. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, the group asking for this legislation, has been patient, but it's a good thing that nobody's been holding their breath. They had been co-operative in every sense of the word, and hopefully this time, the co-operative approach will pay off.

The member for Leeds–Grenville rightly pointed out that, had the government not prorogued the House, this bill most likely would be law by now, and that by pro-

roguing the House as they did on October 15, dimming the lights in this Legislature and in the process dimming democracy in Ontario, 100 bills died on the order paper at their various stages and, if they were to be revived, would have to be reintroduced and started again from scratch. He questioned whether or not the government is sincere when it says it wants to work with the opposition, and he provided examples which seemed to confirm that the government's seeming efforts to reach out are, in fact, really a smokescreen hiding their true cynical intent.

He pointed out that Bill 14's provision to empower the Landlord and Tenant Board to waive the \$45 filing fee for certain tenants has the potential to create huge problems. He cited a report prepared by the Federation of Rental-housing Providers in Ontario which demonstrated how frivolous complaints will plug up the system and are extremely and unnecessarily costly for landlords. Ultimately, this hurts tenants as well, because the rent they pay is their landlord's revenue and, one way or another, in due course, the landlord's expenses will eventually be reflected in the rent that tenants pay.

He spoke about the meagre briefing he received on the bill, which is unfortunate, and again makes us question the government's rhetoric about wanting to co-operate with the opposition. He spoke about the landlords and the tenants he's met in his attempts to reach out around the province and, implicitly, the need for the government to find a fair balance between their needs and their interests.

He concluded his hour-long speech with a suggestion that he might ask for unanimous consent to speak for an additional half-hour. While he'd given a fine speech, I have to admit I was glad the House didn't grant him those additional 30 minutes. We look forward to hearing his comments at third reading, assuming the bill makes it out of committee before the writ is dropped.

On the subject of affordable housing, I should remind the House of the outstanding leadership shown by the county of Wellington. Almost three years ago, in June 2010, I was pleased to attend the official grand opening of Fergusson Place, on Gordon Street in Fergus. Fergusson Place is a 55-unit building on the north edge of town. It was built with a \$5.7-million contribution in municipal capital funding, a smaller, but still significant, contribution of \$3.8 million from the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program and, obviously, a significant contribution from the province of Ontario, which we appreciate. I'm pleased to report that Fergusson Place has become a great success, and the families who call it home have benefited from the county of Wellington's initiative and leadership, and the partnership with the other orders of government. I know that the county of Wellington is very interested in pursuing new affordable housing projects, should the opportunity arise, in partnership and with the financial support of the national and provincial governments.

Likewise, the region of Halton has shown outstanding leadership when it comes to the issue of affordable housing. This week, I spoke with regional chair Gary Carr, and we discussed this. Regional council recently adopted a resolution on the report they had received from

the Halton housing advisory committee. The committee has done a great deal of research on the issue and identified a number of recommendations to address the affordable and assisted housing needs in Halton.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is up, so I'll yield the floor. I look forward to the questions and comments of other members.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to say that we respect the comments made by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. We respect the fact that there's some disagreement with certain aspects of the bill, and the best way to respect him and his caucus and to respect the housing co-operative people who want to get this dealt with is to send it to committee right away.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm pleased always to hear the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. I concur with my colleague from the NDP. We've had some 12 hours of debate; it's time Bill 14 was sent to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** My colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, I believe, summarized very succinctly the dilemma that we find ourselves in today, as well as the litany of reasons why this bill isn't already in a committee or dealing with the regulations and implementation. I say that because he has served here for 20-plus years, and he has heard this issue and how important it is, I'm sure, in his riding of Wellington-Halton Hills. He has listened to people who find the dispute resolution mechanisms that are in place today unimpressive.

These changes are needed, and I think the government, as he said before, has the tools to move this to the committee stage. That's what the public and viewers today, and those listening from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, who have diligently shepherded this bill—with the minister here as well today; she knows very well that she does have the tools, although they're rather sharp-edged tools, to relinquish the right to speak.

When you say the word "parliamentarian," it's a French word which means "to speak"—"parler"; "parler français." What we're doing is representing issues beyond just the content of Bill 14. We're actually representing the right to speak, the right to hear and the right to listen to responses from the minister, whether it's finance or whether it's energy or whether it's health care, and get a reasonable response or at least information about why they can't make the decision we would prefer. It's not to leave the impression that we're just being obstructionist. You could make the argument that they are being just as obstructionist in the fact of not using the appropriate tools—House leaders working co-operatively to move stuff through the legislative process in a minority government.

I support the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm happy once again to welcome Harvey Cooper and his crew here back to Queen's Park again. Harvey, we love you, but we really don't want to see you here any longer. That means that we're really hoping that we can push this on to committee, making sure that we're getting this bill enacted to help out the people of this province in getting the co-op work completed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Wellington–Halton Hills, you've got two minutes.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank the members for their comments and questions and observations, and I was certainly glad to have the opportunity to speak to this bill this afternoon.

I was referring to the affordable housing needs in the region of Halton, and I wanted to tell the House that after I got this letter from the regional chair, in response, I wrote the Minister of Finance on Tuesday, copying the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I wrote that the region of Halton would like to move ahead, but they need the co-operation and support of the provincial government.

1700

We await the provincial budget. We look forward to learning of the government's commitment to housing, if there is one. We look forward to the debate on the budget and the vote that will follow. While no one knows what the outcome will be, we know this: The Ontario PC caucus stands ready and prepared to assume the responsibility of government again; to restore this province to its rightful place as a leader in Confederation; to strengthen our economy so that our province becomes a magnet for investment and the creation of the new jobs that we need; to ensure that quality health care is accessible for those who need it; that our schools are centres of learning, idealism and inspiration; that taxpayers' money is managed prudently, not flagrantly wasted; and that government is truthful and forthcoming, not sneaky and evasive.

This is the promise of the future with the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and we look forward to putting our plans to the people for their consideration.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'd like to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for your clarity for Harvey Cooper. I would also like to say that you are a mentor and an inspiration when you speak, so thank you so much.

It is my pleasure to rise today to join the ongoing discussion around Bill 14, an act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act. This legislation was originally rolled out during the last session. Then, as now, this legislation's intention is to bring greater efficiency, accessibility and transparency to the co-op dispute resolution process, a process that can be painfully convoluted. Then, as now, our caucus has

supported this kind of legislation in spirit and intent. But concept is not to be confused with content, Mr. Speaker.

Housing is a basic need, and Ontario's residents deserve a safe, healthy, affordable place to call home. One of the conditions for making that possible is restoring some balance to the dispute resolution process. As anyone who has experienced it can attest, the process for terminating occupancy agreements for co-ops is complex, costly and time-consuming for non-profit housing providers and their members. Yet successful dispute resolution is absolutely essential to ensure the continued success of co-operative housing. Anything less betrays the idea that is installed right there in the name of this residential model.

It is the duty of all of us in this House to do everything we can to foster fairness in that system, to promote the cause of reason and to encourage a clear and effective process. We need to work to ensure that co-ops are able to resolve disputes in a way that is respectful, that cools conflict and that lays the foundation for a space of civility and dignity, Mr. Speaker. These are things that we can often take for granted but which only ever come about as the result of a society that is willing to work to defend those qualities and conditions.

There are a number of them. This province has roughly 550 not-for-profit housing co-ops, which provide affordable housing for 44,000 households containing some 125,000 Ontarians. Obviously, that gives all of us in this Legislature a chance to do a lot of good with legislation like this. That seems to be the intent here, Speaker.

Bill 14 aims to streamline and rationalize the current system of solving problems and disputes, and efficiency and balance in that regard are to be applauded. The evidence suggests that there is often a significant cost in going to court to resolve many of the points of friction surrounding co-operative housing.

The Ontario PC Party has long been supportive of the idea of taking co-operative housing disputes from the court system and putting them into the jurisdiction of the Landlord and Tenant Board. It's long overdue that the minister would act on this initiative by making a very straightforward amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act. We think that's a step worth taking, and we're pleased to see that this legislation is coming from a familiar headspace.

Bill 14 would allow co-op boards to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve those tenant disputes currently provided for under the Residential Tenancies Act. That would shift approximately 300 co-op housing dispute cases in all, Mr. Speaker. It is a sensible thing to do. This is, after all, where other housing disputes are settled. As others have rightly stated, it is certainly the decent thing to do. The current way of doing things creates needless ill will. We can do better. Bill 14 would allow disputes to be settled through a mediator, which is a more economical and efficient process.

We on this side of the House do have some concerns that consultations with landlords, tenants and advocacy groups around co-operative housing have been somewhat

limited. Others may disagree, and they are free to do so, but we would like to see broader and more substantial consultation on this legislation before it returns for third reading.

Again, there is no disagreement on the spirit of this bill. All of us recognize that this is an opportunity to do something good to make people's lives better in a real way, and that is always a satisfying way of concluding our work in this Legislature. It is important, however, that we do so in a way that does the most good and makes the most sense for landlords, for tenants and for the system as a whole.

As with other landlord and tenant disputes, the proposed provisions in Bill 14 are the same that all other landlords in this province have, and which are fair, to evict a tenant. These provisions might include rent arrears, late payments of rent, wilful damage, illegal activity, and similar transgressions that negatively impact the landlord and other tenants.

The new provisions in Bill 14 would also streamline the resolutions process by allowing co-ops to appeal directly to the board to terminate a former member's occupancy of a member unit and evict under a few straightforward circumstances. Such conditions might include, for example, where the former member has terminated his or her membership and occupancy rights; where the former member's membership and occupancy rights have expired as of a predetermined date; and where the former member is a post-secondary student living in a student housing co-operative and has given notice of termination.

These are things that currently require the parties concerned to go to court and spend a considerable amount of time and money. The legislation before us would reduce the load of these cases and ease the burden on our court system, which is costly and which saps the limited resources of an overburdened system.

Bill 14 also addresses the legal costs that can be incurred by co-op members. The average cost of resolving co-op disputes in court is between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per case. From the point of view of a Legislature where we see millions evaporate in the blink of an eye—or worse, without blinking—that might not seem like much, but it's money being wasted that would be better put towards the housing system.

So far, so good, and yet the government has seen fit to modify the previous legislation, which of course had all-party support during the last session. It has included an amendment clause that gives the Landlord and Tenant Board the power to waive a \$45 filing fee from low-income tenants. As far as we have been able to tell, there were no stakeholders or associations advocating for this very specific change, so it concerns us to see this amendment put forward without any consultation. The costs of this amendment are unknown. In briefings, the ministry was unable to identify who might qualify to have the fee waived—what the criteria or cut-off point would be.

That's the real liability here. The government has essentially opened up a Pandora's Box, where anyone

with a grievance now has a tool in their tool box. They are creating a scenario where disgruntled landlords or tenants would now have legal recourse to drag every dispute to the Landlord and Tenant Board for an additional challenge, introducing a new source of drag and delay in a system that is already bogged down.

We know that the system as it stands costs co-op members a million dollars in unnecessary legal costs every year, so it's not a stretch to imagine a new scenario that would cost them a million dollars but also clog up the court system, at an untold cost in time and money to all Ontarians. That's probably not the intention, but it's certainly a consequence of the kind of back-of-napkin thinking we're used to seeing from the party opposite.

We all appreciate that the current dispute resolution process can be frustrating for everyone involved, that it is excessively long and costly, comes with emotional wear and tear, and ultimately compromises quality of life, so I'm at a loss as to why there would be a spontaneous modification to the previous legislation that takes us out of the swamp and into another area. Of course, making one spontaneous change begs the question why we're not being more ambitious or practical in making changes that really need to be made or that would make things even more workable.

**1710**

Having said that, I'm confident that we can address these sorts of concerns at committee. I'm generally supportive of this legislation, and I look forward to the ongoing discussion around it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I think if you looked up "filibuster" in the dictionary, you'd find this debate this afternoon. Again, we support this. We want to send it to committee. In the meantime, if you open the Toronto Star today you'd see there are tenants in this province who have no rent control. We have a government that has been sitting on its hands for 10 years now while people's rents are going up by as much as \$500 today. Let's pass this. Let's get this through. Let's debate something real that will actually support tenants to be able to afford their rent in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to respond to what was said. Bill 14, Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, second reading debate continues. Let's get it passed so that these people can go out and provide the social housing, the low-cost housing, the good housing we want in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm trying to be patient here, and I listened very attentively to the member from Burlington. I thank her for her preparation to make reasoned observations about the bill itself, Bill 14, and some of the comments she made, similar to those made by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills.

The intent on our side, certainly, is to get this to committee. I do think it's important to recognize that most bills will be improved in committee. There are some frailties. If I'm lucky this afternoon, I will get a chance to speak for longer than two minutes. I was hoping I'd have an hour, because there's that much to say on this bill. I've listened to members in the gallery. Harvey has talked to me, as well as Diane and Judy and Dale. They live with it. They want to improve it, and we want to improve it.

The bill has had three attempts. It's still not the law. We could talk about prorogation—imagine, we were all laid off for four months. Imagine, if you were living in a co-op and a four-month dispute went on and on, how frustrated the tenants would be. We feel like frustrated tenants. This is a co-op, so to speak. It's a co-op where there are people who have the keys to the vault; that's Kathleen Wynne. They've spent all the money; that's Dalton McGuinty. I would say the NDP are kind-hearted people; there's no question about that. And we just want it to be done fairly and professionally. That's exactly what I hear.

Our leader Tim Hudak talks about fairness almost every day in caucus. This is what's missing here. It's missing in this bill. It's missing in Bill 36, the agriculture bill. I have no confidence in the government that this will get done.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened to the member, and she talked about Pandora's Box. I am reminded that when Pandora opened the box, all the evils entered into the world, save and except hope. The box was closed in time so that hope was preserved. I hope we get on with this debate and send this to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Burlington, you have two minutes.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to commend the member from Leeds–Grenville for taking such an active interest in this issue around co-operative housing since taking on the portfolio of municipal affairs and housing critic for the opposition party. I say that as someone who has enormous respect for the passion and knowledge that is visible to all of us here in this House, and I say that from personal experience.

In November, while the Legislature was prorogued, the member for Leeds–Grenville, along with the member for Nipissing, was good enough to spend a day in my riding, touring Stoa Co-operative Homes. Harvey Cooper, the managers and staff were great hosts, as were the residents. I know that the member for Leeds–Grenville has expressed his gratitude for the hospitality and openness of everyone at Stoa. I would also like to offer my thanks, once again, to them for being so generous with their time that day.

Too often we forget, but I think it's important to be reminded on a regular basis that the work we do here should not be the product of silos. It's far better when our policies are shaped by fieldwork and community and stakeholder input, and I think that's certainly the case for

Bill 14. Although I am, for the most part, supportive of this bill, there are still some details that need to be worked out. I hope that we can deal with these at committee, and I look forward to continuing this debate in the House.

I would also like to say, continuing on from the member from Durham, that the government has the tool—it's called time allocation—which would limit the debate and send it to committee, which we would support.

Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's a distinct pleasure and privilege to stand up today and practise my right as an elected member of this assembly to debate a bill. I find it kind of appalling that some of the members here are actually alluding to the fact that this is a filibuster or that we are dragging this out. You know what? I was elected to come here and speak and represent my residents, my constituents in Barrie, on every bill that comes through here, if I so choose. And you know what? I so choose to represent the people of Barrie. I absolutely am interested in speaking in favour of this bill here today, and I want to tell everyone here and all the people in Barrie why. I think it's appalling that anyone would suggest that we rush anything through in this House.

Speaking to Bill 14, regarding non-profit housing co-operatives, I actually had the pleasure of serving as a director on the Barrie Non-Profit Housing Corp. as a councillor in the city of Barrie, and I know very well the needs different communities have, especially in Barrie. There are thousands of underprivileged people in the city of Barrie, thousands of families in the city of Barrie, who are being underserved because they can't find an affordable place to live. I know many of them personally. We need to do better at this, and we need to do whatever we can to entice landlords to be able to get into the business, entice even local governments like Barrie who are involved in trying to create more co-op housing opportunities in different communities. This bill does go a little bit of the way in trying to do that, helping our most vulnerable citizens and those in need. We need to improve the process for resolving disputes between landlords and tenants. It's a good goal, and it's one that we support. However, this bill is far from perfect, for reasons that I will go into in just a little bit.

I'll start by recognizing that the bill gets a number of issues right. You know, even a blind squirrel finds the odd nut here and there. Generally speaking, we support this bill, as I mentioned, and we support the primary issues it attempts to address.

This bill proposes to move many disputes out of our already bogged-down court system and into the jurisdiction of the Landlord and Tenant Board. I have heard of so many tenants and landlords alike that actually want their disputes resolved. Some are actually in a case where they need to resolve their disputes in a faster manner because it matters to their business, it matters to the fact

that they may even lose a property that they own as landlords, or they may be evicted from a place as a tenant. We need to somehow streamline this, and putting the jurisdiction of these in the Landlord and Tenant Board could be a good idea, if the resources are there when that bottleneck is created there as well.

It is an important change. There are as many as 300 cases a year that are stuck being resolved through the courts. The cases are costly to everyone involved. They are costly to the tenants, who often can't afford it; it puts them more in debt and worsens their situation. They are costly to landlords, who have usually made quite an investment in their properties, both in capital investment and operating expenses, and need it to be resolved quickly and efficiently. And to the province—I mean, through the system itself and through hiring of judges and our whole system, and bogging it down with things that really aren't a priority.

Tenants in co-ops are out up to \$1 million a year in fees for these court cases. These are tenants who are most positively served by low-income housing or co-op housing. Additionally, there's the cost to the province—on average between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per case to resolve. Do the math: That's \$5,000 times 300. That's some big money that can be taken care of here, and that's hopefully what this bill looks to resolve.

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The Landlord and Tenant Board is the right place for cases to go. When this bill was introduced as Bill 65 last year, we absolutely supported it. It saves money for the province, it saves money for tenants and landlords and it helps ease the backlog that has been plaguing our court system. Taking action to resolve important issues, after all, is not something that this government does very often, so I think we need to celebrate it when the effort is made.

For example, in 2008, the Auditor General highlighted the growing number of cases backlogged in Ontario courts, growing by 17% in just five years. The same Liberal government sitting across from me today then committed to a four-year plan to cut the number of appearances and days in court required in certain cases by 30%. At the end of their big four-year push, they had only reduced it by 6%—not exactly an overachievement—completely failing to even come close to their own targets. Maybe that's why they're reticent to give themselves targets, especially on the Local Food Act. This bill will not solve our overloaded court system with the relatively small number of cases a year it will help, but it's a good start.

Even this bill has had a number of false starts happen to it. Our critic for municipal affairs, the terrific member from Leeds–Grenville, has been very involved in this issue. He has pointed out multiple times that when Bill 65 was before us in the fall, it had a great deal of support from all sides, in fact. It was therefore unfortunate that this McGuinty–Wynne government couldn't get the job done and pass the bill that was a no-brainer to many, including us. Instead, they prorogued the Legislature, and

it died on the order paper along with many other good bills, like my own bill, which had support from members of all different parties and many across the province.

It's important to point this out: This government ran from its duty and commitment to Ontarians. They had work to do; instead, they ran away under the weight of their own scandals. Their prorogation has cost tenants, landlords and the province millions more. This is an issue that could have been resolved, but instead was kicked down the line by this Liberal government.

Some parts of this bill—and I do mean only some; not all—do bring positive benefits to Ontario, and we support that fully. There are other parts of this bill, however, that raise some questions. As our critic pointed out, there has been an addition to this bill. This is not the same bill that had generated so much support in the fall. There's a new provision to create a system to waive the \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants; with this new provision, the Liberals may have turned a win-win into a lose-lose.

This amendment, which goes against the spirit of cooperation we had just last fall, could result in a much larger number of applications from both landlords and tenants, thus creating more of the bottleneck that we're actually trying to resolve in the first place. It's kind of counterintuitive. In a February 2011 report, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers noted that it currently takes up to 90 days on average for a dispute to be resolved. This new addition to the bill, by increasing the possibility for numerous applications, may see the average of 90 days actually skyrocket.

Just like that, this Liberal government may have recreated the problem they were trying to solve in the first place. It's a recurring theme, I think. They may bring relief to one system while burdening another, with no discernible benefits to all involved. Let's be clear: This will harm everyone involved. It could see an increase in the number of unjustified applications to landlords, and that, in turn, would only increase the wait times for those tenants that have legitimate issues that need to be addressed in good time. It's a provision that hurts all sides.

This is a system that should be efficient in dealing with all reasonable disputes, both by landlords and tenants alike. This addition to the bill may make that more difficult to accomplish, and that's my fear. The addition of this clause makes me think that the ministry has not conducted the same level of consultations and stakeholder engagement that the member from Leeds–Grenville actually has. The inclusion of a clause that could only be described as a lose-lose provision makes it clear that they have not done their research in full. That is why, in support of making this the best possible bill for landlords and tenants both, we need to have province-wide hearings.

We had a bill, Bill 65, that would have clearly benefited everyone. This government has taken a step backwards with this new amendment, I believe. In 2006, this government proclaimed to have undertaken an unprecedented level of consultation. I wonder what they've

been doing since then. Consultations with people whom this will affect must be an ongoing, continuing process. Our job is to serve Ontarians. That does not mean hearing them out once and forgetting about them for seven years after that.

We must have province-wide hearings. The minister should speak to many of the great co-op landlords in the province. Ninety of our 107 ridings have co-ops; they span the province, and so should the consultations. There are 550 co-ops in Ontario, and this bill will affect 125,000 Ontarians. It's clear that the province-wide hearings must be conducted, so that this government can hear directly from those that are most affected by the effects of this bill.

As my time comes to a close here, I want to be clear: There are the makings of a really good bill here, one that one can support wholeheartedly. The bill that preceded this one did an effective job of providing solutions to the problems. It's unfortunate this Liberal government decided to make a good thing worse by adding an unnecessary amendment without considering the consequences of that amendment.

That is why, in support of this bill and in support of the people of Ontario, we would like to see more extensive consultations and hearings. For a government that has often avoided responsibility and accountability, it might be too much to ask for an explanation of the reason for this amendment, yet Ontarians surely deserve one.

We support much of this bill. With further hearings and consultations, we're sure that the minister will realize the error she has made and we can make this legislation even better.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Liberals proroguing: Yes, that kicked the bill down the hill for a few months. But the Tories aren't helping by continuing to speak to it. Two wrongs don't make a right, my gran always said. So let's get this to committee. Let's do it soon. Let's do it fast. Let's get out of here. It's a beautiful day, I hear.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I concur wholeheartedly with my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. It is time to get this very excellent Bill 14 to committee. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to compliment the member for Barrie for a fine speech that he gave this afternoon. I think, again, it shows the House how a member of the opposition does his job well. The fact is, when we debate these issues in the Legislature, we are doing our job as members of provincial Parliament, privileged to be here representing our constituents. Yes, there are times when people would like the process to move more quickly, and certainly normally we would like to see bills that are in the public interest proceed through the process in a

reasonable way. But I think it's important, and the member pointed out, I think, that the fact is the Liberal government prorogued the House starting October 15. The House was prorogued for four months and four days. Of course, had the House not been prorogued, many of the bills, some 100 bills that were on the order paper, would have proceeded in the legislative process as you would expect they would have, at least leading up to a reasonable session probably terminating sometime before Christmas. So for the government now to be pointing the finger at the opposition and suggesting that we're holding things up is a bit hard to take, given the fact that they prorogued the House for four months and four days, and I would add that.

But, again, I think the member for Barrie touched on one of the key points in this piece of legislation that members should consider, and of course that is the fact that the bill was introduced before and that there has been this new provision added to the bill that seems to come from nowhere, allowing the Landlord and Tenant Board the opportunity to not charge the \$45 filing fee for disputes. We're concerned that this may very well lead to a lot of frivolous complaints that will tie up and further backlog the system. As I said earlier in my remarks, to the extent that the system is backlogged, that means everybody's concerns and everybody's issues are not going to be dealt with in an expeditious manner.

So I think the member for Barrie has brought forward some very important points in this debate. I'm glad that he had the chance to speak, and I'm looking forward to his two-minute replay.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Trinity–Spadina, questions and comments.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's very clear from hearing all the speeches made by the Conservative members that they want to punish the Liberal Party. I understand that, but the people you are really punishing are the non-profit housing co-operative people who are waiting to get this done. I hear what you are all doing, and I hear what you are saying, member from Barrie, but the best way to respect them is to send it to committee as quickly as possible. You've punished the Liberals, perhaps not enough, but this is not the way to do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member for Barrie, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Again, I'll say that I'm really kind of appalled that everybody hasn't taken the opportunity to speak to this bill. We came here to do a job. We came here to discuss things; we came here to debate things; we came here to discuss the merits and the detriments of different bills. So to actually not support speaking to this—and I know it's a nice day; I know everyone wants to go home and ride their bikes and do whatever you do. But the fact is, we're here to do a job, we were elected to do a job, and we're going to damned well stand here and do it. I'm not going to apologize for taking every ounce of the time that I have to represent the people of Barrie and the people of Ontario in actually speaking to this bill in a meaningful way.

There are elements of this bill that we cannot support. There are elements of this bill that I think need to be fixed, and they need to be addressed. Each one of us who has spoken has talked about different elements of this bill that need to be addressed, which I think shows the value of actually standing up here today and doing our jobs. I know none of us want to do it—and I'm not sure why we're the only party that's actually willing to do what we've been sent here to do, which is to represent the people who elected us to be here.

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But you know what? I'm not going to apologize for it. I'm proud to stand up and talk about how we need to help people who are landlords, who are tenants, who have been stuck in the system. They've been backed up, backlogged in the system. It's costing them money, it's costing them time and it's costing them their health in many cases. This bill actually has amendments in it that have changed from the last time it was introduced, that are counterintuitive. They go back and actually do damage to the original purpose of the bill.

This needs to be addressed. They're not willing to do it because they want to go home on a Thursday; that's really what it boils down to. It boils down to people not wanting to talk about a bill, to talk about the merits and the faults of this bill.

Anyone who wants a good bill should be willing to stand and speak to it.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Durham on a point of order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Earlier today in the session, I was commenting, and I should correct the record. I mentioned that the member was from Timmins-Cochrane; it should have been Timiskaming-Cochrane, and I'd like to correct my record.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been waiting anxiously to address this. I'm pleased that the minister is here. I say that out of respect. She must realize that there are some things that could be done to improve this bill. So out of respect for her presence here, I put that on the record—but it doesn't get any better than that.

I do say this: I do want to put on the record as well that in attendance we have, as I mentioned before, but in my formal remarks, members of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada here—patiently. They include Harvey Cooper as well as Dale Reagan, Diane Miles and Judy Shaw. Thank you very much for being here. I think they deserve a round of applause from all members on this Thursday afternoon.

I also want to put on the record very clearly that I do meet and have met with, over my roughly 18 years here—plus the several years I had on municipal council prior to coming here. Borelia co-operative housing in Port Perry has 70 units. From time to time, I hear from people on various sides of the discussion. As well, I hear

from Bowmanville Valley Co-operative Homes with 68 units—but not a large amount of time.

Actually, for the record, many of the members have used pretty much boilerplate commentary. I'm going to stick to something quite refreshing. I've actually read most of the bill, and I think it has some genuine surprises for members who haven't taken the time to read it. I would say that when you look at it, it does give the co-operative association some brand new, hefty tools. They're probably needed to resolve some of these unsolvable disputes.

I'm going to look at the act itself, for the indulgence of the members: "Most of the amendments are for the purpose of creating a procedure in the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 for non-profit housing co-operatives to regain possession"—important—"of a member unit occupied by a person after his or her membership and occupancy rights in the co-operative terminate or expire." It's very important to realize that their rights will be terminated under some dispute mechanism.

"Currently, non-profit housing co-operatives can regain possession of a member unit only by obtaining a writ of possession from the Superior Court of Justice." In other words, they've got to go to court—and that's the issue in a nutshell. It's the most important issue. That means that the tenant, to defend their rights, needs to spend \$5,000 or \$10,000 on a lawyer and, I suspect, wait, and have anxiety for groups that may not be high up the food chain to start with—I hope that's not too blunt—but people who have had challenges in their lives in some respect.

Also, it goes on: "Termination of occupancy and eviction of former members from member units of non-profit housing co-operatives"—and the amendments are quite specific. It says, "The key amendment is the addition of part V.1 to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. The new part sets out the circumstances under which a non-profit housing co-operative may apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board (the Board) for an order terminating a former member's occupancy of a member unit and evicting the former member. These provisions parallel provisions in part V of the Residential Tenancies Act..." There's the legal language around what this really does. It's important for the record to put that out there.

I know our member from Leeds-Grenville, the critic, has done a formidable job in representing our concerns in parts of the bill. This is why we would support the bill and the intent to remove it out of the costly dispute resolution process into a process more founded in trying to find mediated solutions—that, to me, is really an important first step. Whether it's in any legal matter, finding a non-court procedure would probably benefit everyone. I can think of cases that are currently—when I look at some of the things going on here as an example, this all relates to this, the rights of persons being expunged of rights.

I look at, for instance, the Ornge board that was appointed. Somehow, they know nothing now of things that

were happening that they should have known things about. The fiduciary duties are clear in law on the board of directors' pecuniary interests as well as their rights and responsibilities. That's similar to this in a much smaller arena. They were making millions of dollars, and it's all covered up—that's perhaps too strong of a word—hidden from the public who are actually paying for it.

I see much of the same thing happening in a number of areas. When you look at the gas plants, for instance, clearly the Premier has said it was a political decision—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I hope you're going to bring this around to the bill in front of you.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This does relate to co-op housing. It's the issue of rights and responsibilities. This bill goes quite a ways to resolving disputes being resolved in courts.

Gosh, at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent because I've hardly gotten to section 7. Could I seek unanimous consent for more time?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member is requesting unanimous consent? Agreed?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** There are lots of noes. Carry on.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I heard a yes, one yes.

Anyway, there are other provisions under the amendments to the Co-operative Corporations Act itself. There are changes there as well. I would encourage members to—I also volunteer to sit on the committee that this will be referred to to make sure we get it right. I think experience has been a teacher.

I do read the mail we get. I think some members haven't read much about this. They're using these photocopied notes.

This one letter I received is quite challenging; I may need more time. I would like to finish the letter. It could be nothing more than four or five minutes. Here it is. It was sent to all members on March 5, 2013. It says:

"Dear sir or madam,

"I encourage you and other members of the Ontario Legislature to support further amendments to Bill 14"—further amendments, okay?—"(Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2013)." I'm going to make sure the minister gets a copy of this; it may not all get on the record.

The letter goes on, "It would be irresponsible for any MPP to fast-track this proposed legislation into law." They don't want it rushed through. Are you listening? "The proposed legislation removes the requirement of a duty of procedural fairness in consideration of the merits of the case 'that the court system offers residents of' co-operatives today.

"In my view, co-op housing member residents that have housing charge disputes or serious maintenance complaint issues require the protections and benefits of the Landlord and Tenant Board ('LTB') and access to mediation services under the residential"—that's the point the bill tries to resolve, access to mediation.

It goes on to say, "Co-op member residents require an adjudicator in the LTB that may ensure decisions related to housing charges, maintenance issues and evictions are procedurally fair, done objectively and impartially without prejudice." So there's some perceived prejudice in the system, it says here.

"In my view, co-ops have associative difficulties, attributable to poor or bad management. Interpersonal skills, multicultural prejudices and challenges, collusion, abuses of power, cliques, and favouritism can present huge problems with reforming co-op tenure disputes. Board of directors, members, and staff can be seen as not being objective, fair and impartial.

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"In my opinion, trying to resolve disputes at co-ops internally will result in sanctions that may include evictions for some member residents that should never occur.

"Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ('CMHC') has operating agreements with many federal program non-profit housing co-operatives located in Ontario.

"In my view, there are some 263 co-ops that may represent an estimated 20,000 households that may represent an estimated 55,000 people in Ontario that would have either rent-geared-to-income or market rent housing charges calculated at co-ops."

It goes on: "Compliance monitoring of the operating agreement between CMHC and co-ops is expensive, not done in detail, and many records that may document the co-ops' management are not monitored. If the co-op breaches the operating agreement then obtaining a court order can be expensive to force the co-op to comply with the operating agreement (specific performance).

"Although co-ops may be encouraged to comply with the operating agreement, compliance of the operating agreement is seldom enforced by CMHC in relation to resident housing charge calculations and co-ops not in good repair. (Please note the Agency for Co-operative Housing Annual Portfolio Performance Review: 2011 Reports to CMHC.)"

I actually do need more time—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Because we're trying to move this debate along, I wrote a small poem for our friends in the gallery. It's a haiku. It goes like this:

Please pass this bill now.

Let's send it to committee.

Tenants need our help.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** The member from Durham delivered a very elegant speech this afternoon, but I just heard from the Leta Brownscombe co-op and the Sunshine co-op in Peterborough. They want this bill to be given a green light now. Let's get it passed, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member for Barrie.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this again.

The member from Durham is always interesting to listen to and always has some good input into the debate. I'm not sure why the other parties are so reticent to discuss this—if there's something that's being hidden or there's something that they don't want known. I'm not sure why. I've never known any Legislature, be it a city council or a federal or a provincial Parliament, to actually encourage stifling debate on anything. Any time we get an opportunity to speak to anything and an opportunity to represent our constituents is a bonus.

This is an important bill. This is one that is critically important to many—I can't tell you how many landlords and tenants come through my office in Barrie and talk about the problems that they have with the system getting clogged up, bogging them down, costing them money, time and, in many cases, their health through stress. To actually say that spending an extra hour or two debating this thing is going to make any big difference in the scheme of things is completely inappropriate for this place. We were sent here to do a job. To not want to do the job and to sit there and huff and puff and talk about all the other reasons why we shouldn't talk about it—I just don't understand it. I don't understand the premise of it.

We have a job to do here, and this job is to make sure this bill can be the best bill it possibly can be and to make sure that we are clear about that. What my riding wants, what the people of Barrie want, are more co-op housing opportunities. We have, like I said, thousands of families that are struggling and looking for co-op housing opportunities. And if they get them, they actually have to go to other places in Simcoe county to get them. We need to entice more landlords to do more to create more co-op housing. This bill doesn't quite get the job done.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Just to comment back to the previous member, we have been debating this bill for hours, for weeks, for months. For years this bill has been going on. It has been exhausted. It's time to move it on to committee so we can make sure that we get the best bill possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Durham, you have two minutes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** They've cut—I lost my time. I have two minutes. Thank you very much.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Unanimous consent to give you one minute.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No. I would actually ask members to be more patient. Reflect on our elected duties here: to represent our constituents and the voices on both sides of the table. It's very critical that we're always listening.

I could say that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills made the most important commentary today about

the political dilemma we find ourselves in. I'm very impressed; I'll say that. We've got the government House leader here; the Minister of the Environment; the Minister of Municipal Affairs; the Minister of Transportation; the Minister of Innovation, who's looking for jobs, trying to create jobs; the Minister of Government Services; and the minister of the Olympics—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Tourism, yes; tourism and culture.

But my point in the arguments I was trying to make to represent my constituents—my constituents have said to me to represent them in fairness and in integrity. They're trying to say that we are not effectively contributing to the debate. We've made it clear that the politics—the government has the tools to resolve this impasse now, and they're refusing to do that for their own reasons. But they're also refusing to agree with our House leaders, Mr. Wilson as well as the member from Leeds–Grenville. If they could resolve this dispute, this and other bills would move to committee.

The committees now are charged with solving the issue with the gas plants, resolving the issue with Ornge, and soon to have the budget. There's so much going on here that this bill is going to be sidetracked, I'm completely convinced.

For the members sitting here, I have little faith in this government—honest to God. Please track them, because they have the tools. They're not using the tools effectively. They can't any longer govern this province. In my opinion, they have lost the confidence—and we're going to deal with that vote of confidence on Monday or Tuesday of next week, because that's what we have to talk about.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** On a point of order, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I just want to express my appreciation to our legislative pages, who have served this Legislature so well over the past number of weeks. They have done a super job, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure many of them would have wanted to have the opportunity to probably distribute the budgets. Unfortunately, they're not going to have that, but we do very much appreciate the good work that our pages—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** —point of order.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to rise at this time and make some response to Bill 14 on the co-ops. The first thing that I want to say is that I have two housing co-ops in my riding. I've always been very pleased and impressed with the opportunities that they've provided for the residents, being invited to things like Girls Inc., which many of you would know is one of the organizations that was set up a few years ago to be able to

provide girls with a sense of their own importance and self-esteem. The group that meets in the one co-op has certainly done an admirable job in providing this kind of service for the community.

The co-ops in my riding have many opportunities for young people to be able to have recreational opportunities and things like that. I think it speaks to the bigger picture of the importance of that kind of housing and that kind of housing being made available.

I always have thought that the model of the co-op was one that we should take great pride in, quite frankly, because it is something that is joint with the federal government in terms of the CMHC, but also the kind of support that it has received throughout all the communities in the province.

The other kind of strength that I see in co-op housing is when there's an emergency. A couple of years ago, there was a fire in one of the co-op housing units, and it was in the middle of the night. People were quick to make sure that the people most affected would be safely brought out; there were people who were disabled and who had to be helped out. There was no loss of life, but people were there, quite frankly, in nothing more than their nightshirts.

**1750**

The Salvation Army organized clothing and household contributions from the community. In fact, they were so overwhelmed with the contributions they got, whether it was children's clothing, blankets, towels or whatever people needed, that they actually had to say, "Thanks, we've got enough." The local restaurants gave people vouchers for breakfast and for lunches in order to be able to provide that kind of support for people who suddenly found themselves homeless.

It took a while before they were able to go back to those units, simply because of the smoke damage and things like that, but I think that it tells us a lot about why co-ops are so important in each of our communities and the kind of opportunity that they provide to families, particularly, who might not otherwise have both the stability of a permanent address and the security that comes with that kind of community.

In terms of specific issues, I think it's important to look at—despite the concerns of others with regard to the time, that wasn't a concern when we prorogued. Obviously, this is a bill that requires a certain amount of consideration because it does impact on communities across the province.

The idea of changing things from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board in terms of disputes—I recognize the value of taking them out of the courts in terms of the kinds of expenses that you're looking at. It's suggested that people would be obliged—somewhere between \$3,000 to \$5,000, and there's a backlog on cases being heard.

I know that in my own community's case, I've had members from that community come to see me about the difficulties that they have in those kinds of disputes that simply crop up as part of human existence, where they

then are seeking some kind of redress. We all know that justice is not served unless—I can't remember the exact wording of the saying—justice delayed; that's it. Justice delayed is not justice served, and for people who are living in quite close proximity of each other, and there are things that are happening in those neighbouring homes, it's a huge strain on the family to have to wait before there's any kind of resolution.

I think that the bill—looking at moving it from there to the Landlord and Tenant Board is probably a good one, but I sense a cautionary tale here. In the 2011 report Justice Denied: Ontario's Broken Rent Dispute Process—all is not well there either, in terms of the manner in which things can be resolved in a speedy way.

I think that a bill such as this is one that very much deserves to go to hearings, because of the fact that we're talking about the manner in which people's lives are directly affected.

The question of the \$45 fee that has come into this bill is one that raises a lot of red flags. Who decides who's eligible? Generally speaking, one decision is not the only decision. People want to appeal it. People want to see some kind of cost recovery. There are all kinds of issues that need to be determined before the government should move on the question of the \$45. At the same time, it's also an opportunity to look at the efficiency of the Landlord and Tenant Board, because obviously, it may be equally overwhelmed by this.

In wrapping up, I would just say that it's most important, I think, for all of us as MPPs, recognizing the value of the co-op housing movement and the kind of opportunity it brings in our neighbourhoods and in our communities, and at the same time we have an obligation to make sure that this piece of legislation, which is going to have a direct impact on people's lives, is done with the care that only comes when you are able to provide the public with the consultation process of committee hearings.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Just to wrap up, Mr. Speaker, we're hoping to get this into committee. We want to thank the folk here from the co-op movement who want to move it along as quickly as possible. God knows, we want to do everything to help the co-op movement to have more co-ops and better co-ops, and we just ask our neighbours to the right again—it's going to come back next week—to keep it short. We have debated this ad nauseam now, and it's time to get going.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and to all a good night.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we were prorogued for exactly 18 days of sittings, so that's the truth, which is about the smallest in any record of any party. So if the party opposite has an issue with that, shame on them, because there's a word for that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

Questions and comments? The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your patience as well.

I also want to again thank the member from York–Simcoe, who brought civility and a patient tone to her comments in respect to the topic that we're dealing with.

Now, I have taken notice that in the House here today—two, three, four, five, six, seven—there's about 11—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now, I'm only saying this: I'm impressed that the only Liberal members here are mostly cabinet members or want to be cabinet members. Now, Ms. Jaczek should be in cabinet. She should actually be the health minister because she's a doctor.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, seriously.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Look, I had no portfolios, but I had the liberty to speak my mind, which I continue to do, and that's the privilege of being here. Never lose sight—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, look, I've made mistakes. If you haven't made any, you haven't done anything yet. I would only say this: If a person hasn't made a mistake, they haven't done anything.

And I say to right now, today, that this bill—there are members of our caucus who want to retain the right to speak, and the person in this House who wants to deny them that right, you stand up now and tell them so, that they cannot speak in this Ontario Legislature. It's the very duty and the very principle of this discussion. The lengthy discussions on Bill 14 are not really the salient point here; the salient point here is that we have an intransigent minority government who's waiting to play footsie with the NDP. We'll see this all play out on May 2, and it's very much a collusion of ideas—a collision of ideas or a lack of ideas altogether, as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank you for being patient. You've allowed me to wander rather freely on

some of these topics. For that, I will always be truly grateful. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Mercifully, I'm the second-last person to speak tonight; mercifully, the debate is going to be over. We are going to hear another two minutes from my good colleague from York–Simcoe, and then that's it for the debate.

I am asking, please, you don't need to do this when we come back next week. Please don't bring these people back here again. Please, let's get on with this. That's what we're all about here: passing laws for the people of Ontario, not speaking to hear ourselves speak.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for York–Simcoe, you have two minutes.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you to all those of you who have responded to the remarks that I made.

I think that clearly the issues around being able to present our views in this Legislature are things that we all hold as near and dear, and the opportunity to be able to bring those forward even as the day becomes longer and longer.

I would only want to suggest to those who are here that the opportunity to speak to this bill, to be able to remind all of us why we are here and what the importance is—I just came across a letter that was sent to one of my colleagues on this issue. He's writing about the fact that he's afraid that nothing will be done. He's afraid that there will be no changes made. He talks about the fact that his own personal life is impacted by the kind of problems that he has with his neighbours and as well, in some cases, between landlords and tenants.

He writes: "I can only hope they have not teamed up to not pay. I look after my buildings."

These are real people. These are issues that we all need to take seriously, and we certainly need to be able to further the legislative process to send this into committee.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
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Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
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Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
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Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla  
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri  
Jagmeet Singh  
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best  
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo  
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short



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